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# **SOLDIER OF FORTUNE**

**NOVEMBER  
1983**

**The Journal Of Professional Adventurers**

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# SOF

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

**E**L SALVADOR, Morocco, Guatemala, Afghanistan and Costa Rica.

What all those countries have in common is war and in our upcoming December 148-page *Soldier of Fortune*, we've got hard-hitting articles from each of those hot spots.

Executive Editor Bob Poos was in El Salvador for the recent pacification effort in Usulután Province and arrived in Guatemala just in time to catch the coup attempt in Guatemala City.

Writer Karl Phaler and photographer Adrian Wecer have contributed an in-depth, analytical piece about Morocco's war against the Polisario guerrillas, with some spectacular photos taken from both sides.

Welshman Mark Warman — one of the few journalists in the world who has gone into Kabul with Afghan Freedom Fighters — has an article on the Freedom Fighter school for guerrillas. It's run by a former Afghan Special Forces colonel who learned his trade at the USSR's Mountain Warfare School in Russia and the SAS school in Hereford, England.

Free-lancer Steven Salisbury, who is reporting on the Costa Rican Contras of former Sandinista hero Eden Pastora, *Comandante Zero*, contributed his own eyewitness account of the Sandinista massacre of fleeing Nicaraguan civilians.

We've also got an account on the French Foreign Legion's combat jump into Kolwezi, Zaire, written by an American Legionnaire who made the jump.

From Africa comes a story about an Angolan cross-border operation, written by an American who served with South Africa's most elite unit — 44 Para.

With refreshing candor, former Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt — remember the Z-grams? — offers his perspective on some past, present and likely future happenings in a fascinating and enlightening interview.

Although we liked our first expanded issue — "The World At War," December '82 — we at SOF believe this one is even better.

Because it is a larger issue, 148 pages, it'll cost \$3.50 on the newsstands, but subscribers, of course, will get it as part of their regular package. Another good reason to subscribe. SOF will continue its new 112-page format in January.

If you want to read about the world's hot spots — past and present — don't miss our second "The World's Still At War" issue.

— Jim Graves

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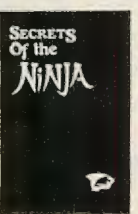
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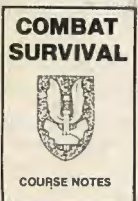
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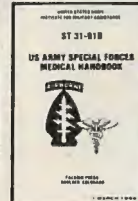


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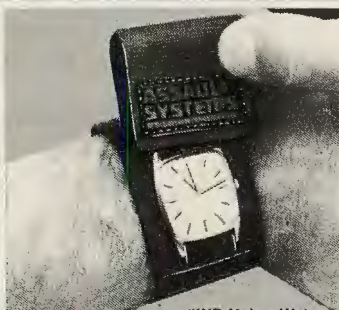


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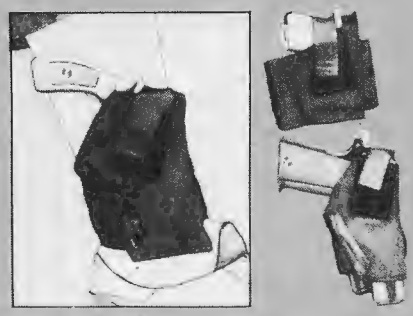
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## IVAN GOES TO VEGAS...

Sirs:

I regret we missed you on your recent trip to El Salvador, but perhaps we can get together another time. In October we will have some of our people in Las Vegas looking over area 54 and perhaps we could have some of our people compete in your shooting matches.

Of course, we would expect the FBI would delegate some of their agents to shoot also. It will be interesting to see which team is better.

We regularly beat the *Glavnoye Rezvedyatelnoye Upravleniye*. Of course they use OG-7s and frequently try to bribe the judges, but we still manage to win 80 percent of the matches.

If we don't meet in Vegas, then perhaps in Costa Rica in 1983. I will be there meeting with our *Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores Centroamericanos*.

Lt. Col. A. Boychenko  
Moscow, USSR

One of our readers out there obviously has a well-developed sense of humor since the letter above — written on letterhead purporting to be that of the *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopavost (KGB)* — arrived at the SOF offices in a U.S. Air Force envelope, mailed from Costa Rica. Good shot.

For those who don't understand the joke, SOF published in January a tongue-in-cheek letter to Boris at the KGB pointing out that we had scored a few scoops on turf where the KGB plays an active hand, and later in April we published a story about a meeting between two of our staff and a KGB agent nicknamed "Jaws." That was also written with tongue firmly in cheek but was based on a real incident. The agent was reassigned right after we published the article. And Jim Coyne — author of the April article — certainly hopes he was not reassigned to Costa Rica. "Jaws" is reported to have quite a bite. —The Eds

## INSULTS IN AFRICA...

Sirs:

I must respond to Charles Sasser's "Intrigue in Africa," which appeared in the July '83 issue of SOF. The claim by Sasser that a group of NCOs "got drunk in their quarters" and took over the government is very misleading.

The NCOs did not get drunk, but were sober and were putting their lives on the line to answer the cry of the Liberian people, denied a voice in the affairs of their country.

Also, the article mentioned that Col. Borteh died while leading a coup. Col. Borteh is not dead. He is alive and well and actively serving his country.

This kind of reporting tastes of unprofessionalism, and is designed to tarnish the good reputation of the Liberian government.

Alfred Karlay  
Los Angeles, California

# FLAK



"WHY DON'T THEY ALL LEAVE US ALONE SO WE CAN KILL EACH OTHER IN PEACE?"

The intent of "Intrigue in Africa" was not to tarnish the reputation of the Liberian government, but rather to tell the story of a U.S. Special Forces team and the Liberian commandos they trained.

Mr. Doe's government may or may not be the finest to emerge in Africa: That remains to be seen. The circumstances of the April 1980 coup, however, are well-documented. Time magazine, for example, reported the NCOs were drinking and drunk in their quarters and planned the coup more or less spontaneously. This was also common knowledge among the Liberian soldiers, many of whom had known the president when he was an enlisted man in the army.

As for Col. Borteh, the SF team returning from Africa was under the impression that he had been killed along with Thomas Weh Syen. Those were the reports. The Liberian government refuses response to any inquiries. However, on the chance that he does indeed live, may his portrait of Fidel Castro rot and fall from the wall.

—Charles W. Sasser  
Because we found it amusing we

thought SOF readers would like to know that an African diplomat told SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown, at a Washington reception, that the Liberians were so upset about the article he would advise SOF not to send anyone there in the near future, unless we had on file a photo of that person standing against a brick wall, or his ju-ju was real good. Seems as though the Liberians objected to the mention that some of them still believe in ju-ju (amulets which ward off bullets). Since we don't, we won't. —Jim Graves

## HOAGLAND HOAX...

Sirs:

After 17 years, I never expected to hear the Hoagland story again, much less see it in print with pictures. My brother, also a former 5th SF, gave me a copy of SOF's special issue on the Gritz affair quite by chance. While thumbing through, I caught the Hoagland story and was surprised by

Continued on page 102





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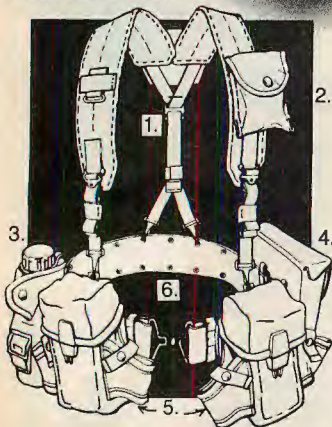
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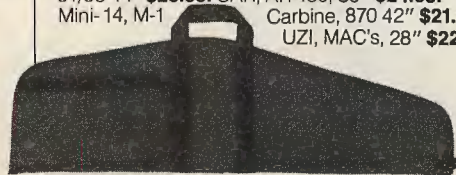
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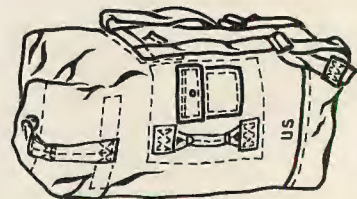


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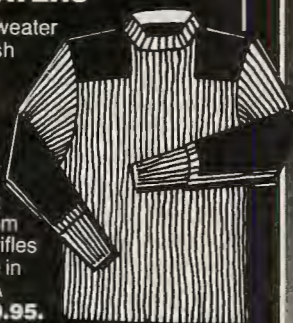
This is the real McCoy. FSN 8435-265-4928. Full size (not commercial as offered by others). The ideal item for that camping trip or sending the kids to camp. 2 shoulder straps. Dimensions: 32" long x 11" wide x 11" high. **\$25.95 or 2 for \$47.95.**

\*Prices good this ad only

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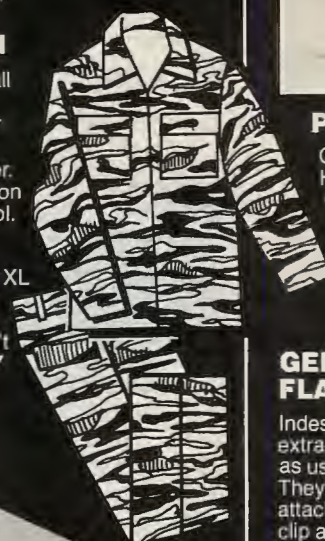
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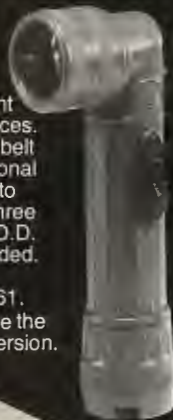
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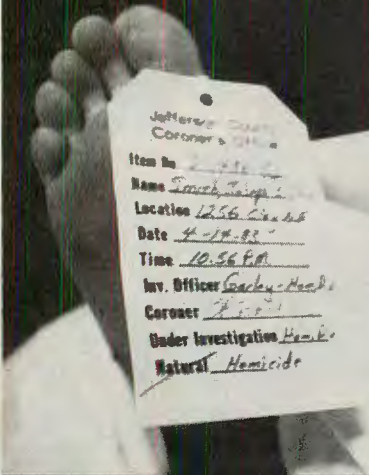
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- Tops in his academy class
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- Pistol team member
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- Two kids



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Location *1256 Pine St*  
Date *4-18-83*  
Time *10:56 PM*  
Inv. Officer *Grady, Harold*  
Coroner *...*  
Under Investigation *...*  
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\* Which, by the way, would have saved the lives of 86.9% of the officers fatally shot in 1981.

# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

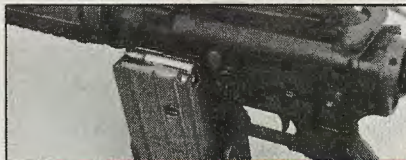


by Ken Hackathorn

THE loudest sound in the world can be the silence of an empty magazine. That will sound like Zen to some, but to the combat veteran or the IPSC shooter I need say no more. Police, soldiers and competitors around the world have been caught with fewer rounds than they thought they had.

Submachine guns were issued to troops in large numbers just before WWII, and this made it even easier to run dry. About this time, some nameless dogface must have figured out that he had twice as many rounds easily available if he taped two box magazines head-to-toe. Then all he had to do was grab the package, hit the magazine release, flip the taped mags end-for-end, and insert the fresh box into the well.

There was one big problem with this system — aside from offering no encouragement for fire control. If the weapon was dropped or if fired from the prone position there was a good chance that the first round or two would get covered in sand, mud or snow, causing feeding and extraction problems. Larger debris might become wedged between the feed lips, entirely blocking the mouth of the magazine.



**A.R.M.S. Mag-Pac on AR15, instantly installed or adjusted with thumbscrews. Photo: Ken Hackathorn**

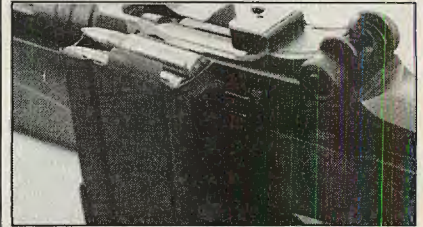
During the Vietnam War some GIs began taping M16 magazines side-by-side with both magazines pointed the same way. The old head-to-toe arrangement allowed the boxes to be taped with their sides flush against each other, since each magazine mouth simply protruded a few inches beyond the butt of the other. Taped in tandem the magazines need to be spaced to clear the sides of the magazine well.

For M16 magazines, the cheap way to do this is to loosely tape a couple of magazines together, leaving about 3/4-inch between them (3/4-inch fiber-reinforced packing tape works a lot better than anything else). Then take several tight wraps of tape around the center of the tape loop, between the magazines, until everything tightens up. Insert one of the magazines into the weapon, holding them apart at the top for easy clearance of the side of the magazine

well. Take another tight wrap just overlapping the bottom of the first tape loop to hold that spacing on the top. Then cinch the mess together with a final tight wrap overlapping the top of the horizontal bands of tape.

And I do mean mess. This is a heavy arrangement, requires a certain amount of fiddling to get it right, and a magazine left for any length of time with packing-tape adhesive on the surface will never be the same.

Several nameless companies have tried to make clamps to replace the various tape harnesses. But they either didn't hold the magazines tightly enough or they broke too easily. Now there are two good magazine clamps.



**Choate's solid clamp on M1A mags, off-set for clearance of operating handle. Photo: Ken Hackathorn**

Choate Machine and Tool Company (Dept. SOF, Box 218, Bald Knob, AR 72010 — see Paul Williams' article on Garth Choate on p. 36) sells double magazine clamps for \$14.95. During extensive testing the nylon and steel Choate clamps proved to be rugged and practical. In .308-length the clamp joins H&K mags as well as those fitting the M1A and similar weapons. Models designed for .223 magazines work well on boxes for the AR15, AR-180 and Mini-14. Just remember to lower the right magazine relative to the left one to allow for clearance of the operating handle on M1As and Mini-14s.

A.R.M.S., Dept. SOF, 230 W. Center Street, West Bridgewater, MA 02379, markets another magazine clamp called the Mag-Pac. Costing only \$12.75, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling, Mag-Pacs are made of blued 16-gauge steel with a plastic spacer. Models are available for .223, .308, 7.62x39mm and 9mm Parabellum SMG magazines.

Clamps are a much better idea than taping schemes. Clamped magazines can be separated for cleaning, finishes are not marred when clamps are properly installed, and one mag won't shovel dirt during prone firing. If you habitually carry a rifle without wearing an assault vest, you need these clamps. ✕

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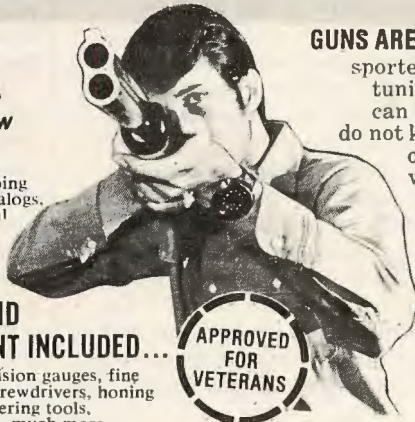
If you qualify otherwise, you may obtain a Federal License to buy and sell guns, ammunition and accessories without inventory... while you are still a student at North American.

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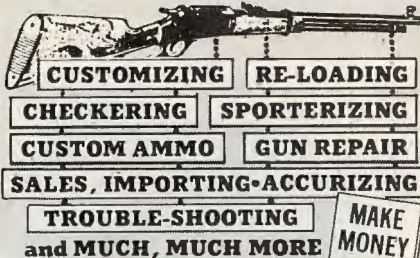
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**TANKS OF THE WORLD.** Edited by Gen. Ferdinand M. von Senger und Etterlin. Nautical Aviation Pub. Co., 8 Randall St., Annapolis, MD 21401. 1983. 900 pp. 731 line drawings and 603 photos. \$49.95. Review by Bill Brooks.

**T**HIS, the sixth edition of **Tanks of the World**, is the first English edition of the excellent *Taschenbuch der Panzer*. The editor, Gen. von Senger und Etterlin, is the current commander-in-chief, Allied Forces, Central Europe [NATO]. He has written numerous books on armored warfare and is considered one of the world's foremost experts on armored vehicles. **Tanks of the World** is an extensive, up-to-date reference work on the military fighting vehicles produced and used by 19 nations.

Concise assessments and extensive tabular data for each are provided. Although not nearly as detailed as the large, expensive *Jane's Armour and Artillery*, **Tanks of the World** is an indispensable pocket-sized reference book that no professional soldier should be without.



**PARACHUTING: The Skydiver's Handbook.** By Dan Poynter. Para Publishing, P.O. Box 4232-O, Santa Barbara, CA 93103. Fourth revised edition, 1983. 183 pp. \$7.95. Review by John Early.

A fellow skydiver once remarked, "You already know parachuting is fun. Don't worry about it; think about it. Don't guess about it; find out about it." If you really want to find out about it, **Parachuting: The Skydiver's Handbook**, is the place to look. If the fledgling jumper had to use only one book to guide him from that first anxiety-filled jump to the wonderment of that first 30-second delay, this would be the book.

The **Handbook** is easy to read, lavishly illustrated and easy to understand. Its text is excellently arranged for the first-jump

# IN REVIEW

student looking at the sport for the first time or for the serious beginning or intermediate skydiver who wants a good, solid foundation to build his parachuting career around.

This contemporary how-to, where-to handbook leads the reader through jump training step by step and then covers intermediate progression into the world of freefall flight.

This book seems to have a little of everything, from an in-depth study of emergency procedures to discussion of various types of equipment encountered in the sport. It even has a complete list of drop-zones worldwide.

This is an excellent text for use in any first-jump course. Any parachute center or club would be well advised to adopt **Parachuting** as a teaching guide for their new students, since it covers more material than most instructors have time to teach. The material Poynter includes in this work will ensure that your students get the best possible information for their futures in the sky.

**THE PARACHUTE MANUAL.** By Dan Poynter. Para Publishing, P.O. Box 4232-O, Santa Barbara, CA 93103. Second revised edition, 1978. 500 pp. \$29.95. Review by John Early.

**T**HIS technical treatise on the parachute covers everything there is to know about aerodynamic decelerators. Poynter has been long acknowledged as "the expert" on parachutes and parachuting in this country, and is regarded throughout the world as one of the leading authorities on all aspects of parachute de-

sign, construction, alteration and repair.

**The Parachute Manual** is known as the "Bible" for parachute riggers everywhere. It is in use by the U.S. armed forces, foreign military forces and governments, the U.S. Forest Service's smoke jumpers and virtually every major parachute-repair facility in the United States.

The **Manual** covers all aspects of parachute construction and design, component parts, materials for repair and alteration, as well as packing instructions for many of the parachutes in use today.

The **Manual** is divided into nine chapters, beginning with the regulations governing parachutes and parachuting. It continues with chapters on the layout of a parachute loft, materials used in repair and alteration, different assemblies encountered in the field, design and construction and ends with the inspection and packing techniques now in vogue in the industry.

Poynter's chapter on maintenance is an excellent example of the attention to detail that has become his trademark. Each repair is discussed in detail, telling the parachute rigger which canopies the repair applies to, the materials needed for the job, which sewing machine to use and how to set it up, the equipment needed for the job and the time usually required to accomplish the repair or alteration. Poynter then sets out a step-by-step procedure for the repair, complete with pictures and diagrams.

The **Manual** contains more than 2,000 photos and drawings and is constantly updated as new techniques become known and used.

This book is a valuable addition to any library that deals with parachutes and other air items and a must for any parachute rigger or serious parachutist. ✕



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**Drill Instructor/Smoky the Bear Hat** — Formerly called the Campaign Hat, this is a really fine quality pressed felt headpiece. A hat with character. No one who wears it escapes a personality change. An uncontrollable urge to shout orders or heap abuses, pursue flammers or write traffic tickets. Let your true or wistful self be heard. Sizes: 6-7/8 to 7-5/8 ..... **\$19.75/each**

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**Ranger Combat Cap-Woodland Camouflage** — latest Army issue. This winterweight cap features lined flaps which can fold out to keep your ears warm and tuck into the hat when the weather's balmy. Sizes run small! Also available in Olive Drab (OD) Green. Sizes 7 1/4, 7 1/2, 7 3/4 ..... **\$9.00/each**

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**Watch Cap, 100% Wool** — This is the genuine GI, tightly knit, and all-wool watch cap. Used by commandos and troops alike, this tightly knit cap fits snug on any size head for maximum warmth on extended cold weather operations. Sides can roll down to protect ears. Choose between dark blue/black (Navy Seal or Marine Recon teams) or OD (olive drab; army) **\$6.00/each**

**Commando Sweater - Commercially made** — patterned after the GI ones, these are commercially made in easy care 100% acrylic. Although they are copies, they are constructed surprisingly true to the all wool ones, complete with sleeve and shoulder patches. Choose between: Olive Drab (OD) Green or Black. Specify Size: S, M, L, XL **\$21.75/each**

**Commando Sweater - Commercially made** — patterned after the GI ones, these are commercially made in easy care 100% acrylic. Although they are copies, they are constructed surprisingly true to the all wool ones, complete with sleeve and shoulder patches. Choose between: Olive Drab (OD) Green or Black. Specify Size: S, M, L, XL **\$21.75/each**

**Battle Dress Uniforms** — Tell us your chest, height, and waist measurements when ordering. Choose from:  
 Woodland Pattern Camouflage — 50% cotton/50% nylon. Army's latest issue, the pants have a reinforced seat and knees; the jacket has reinforced elbows. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants ..... **\$30.00/each; \$57.50/set.**  
 Day Desert Pattern Camouflage — 50% cotton/50% nylon. Latest issue to Airborne Troops of the Rapid Deployment Force. Brand New. Reinforced as Woodland Pattern above. Specify: Jacket or Pants ..... **\$34.00/each; \$65.00/set.**  
 Olive Drab (OD) Green — 100% cotton, ripstop; as used in early Vietnam. Current GI manufacture. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants ..... **\$30.00/each; \$57.50/set.**  
 Tiger Stripe Pattern Camouflage — Commercial Manufacture — these are made by a US Government contractor to military specs. The tiger stripe pattern is true. They are reinforced as the Woodland Pattern Camouflage, above. Regular lengths only (no longs). Specify Jacket or Pants ..... **\$36.75/each; \$69.50/set.**  
 Leaf Pattern Camouflage — 100% cotton ripstop, as issued in Vietnam. Current GI manufacture. Brand New. Specify Jacket or Pants ..... **\$35.75/each; \$69.50/set.**  
 Desert Tan (Khaki) Bush Fatigues — these 6 pocket pants and 4 pocket jackets are of commercial US manufacture to military specs. 100% cotton, they are an excellent buy. Regular lengths only (no longs). Specify Jacket or Pants ..... **\$26.00/each; \$49.00/set.**

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**Ray-Ban Sunglasses 25% Off** — These are the Real McCoy's by Bausch & Lomb. Also USAF and NASA Pilot glasses. Call for free sunglasses brochure.

**Camouflage Collection Catalog** — 24 pages of genuine military clothing, gear and equipment with an emphasis on camouflage **\$1.00/each. Free with any order.**

**US Navy Cold Weather Deck Jackets** — Type A2 — These jackets feature windproof cut and hip closures plus a full zipper front with button over-closure. The Olive Drab (OD) green shell is 50% cotton/50% nylon. This blend allows the jacket to be water repellent (not waterproof) while at the same time it has the softness of the natural fibre. It is lined with double face pile in both the body and sleeves. It sports two hip pockets and a breast pocket with snap closure. The Deck Jacket is cut slightly below the waist so large or tall persons will find it quite comfortable. XS, S, M, L **\$47.75/each; XL \$50.75/each; XXL \$55.75/each.**

**Satisfaction Guaranteed**

**Angle Head Flashlight** — This is the heavy duty olive drab plastic flashlight issued to basic and stealth units. The flashlight is waterproof, non-glare and features 4 different lenses which can be easily installed or removed. It can clip onto the belt or suspender for hands free operation, operates on 2 standard D cell batteries and comes complete with a spare bulb. Brand new, sold in the GI box ..... **\$6.50/each; 2 for \$12.25**

**SHIPPING COST**  
 Please include appropriate shipping costs from chart below with each order. Amounts shown include costs of postage, packaging, insurance and handling.  
 Orders up to \$10.00 ..... **\$3.00**  
 Orders from \$10.01 to 20.00 ..... **3.75**  
 Orders from \$20.01 to 35.00 ..... **4.50**  
 Orders from \$35.01 to 50.00 ..... **5.25**  
 Orders from \$50.01 to 70.00 ..... **6.25**  
 Orders from \$70.01 to 90.00 ..... **7.25**  
 Orders over \$90.00 ..... **8.00**  
 Canadian Orders—Send Double Amount Indicated.

**USAF Flight Jacket** — These flight jackets are issued to military fliers and are designated Type MA1 for Intermediate Cold. (This means that it is the medium weight jacket, designed for comfort in a temperature zone of about 20° to 55° F). Look for the military designation, sizes and stock numbers inside the left pocket. The outer shell and lining are 100% nylon making the jacket completely wind and waterproof. The interlining is 100% polyester fiberfill for the highest degree of warmth per ounce. This jacket is reversible; outside in your choice of either sage green or blue and the inside is survival orange. It features: two hip pockets outside as well as inside, sawn pen and pencil holders plus zippered easy access storage pocket in the left sleeve. This a snappy, convenient, warm, fully functional jacket and it happens to be the latest fashion trend. Specify: Sage Green or Blue Shell - Regular Length Only. Sizes: XS, S, M, L ..... **\$46.75/each; XL \$51.50/each**

**Brand New!! Flight Jackets in Black and Woodland Camouflage** — Exact in every detail to the genuine GI MA1 jackets above, manufactured by the same government contractor, to military specs, with reversible orange linings. The Black nylon shelled jackets feature a gold zipper and the Woodland Camo jackets are made from genuine GI cloth of 50% cotton/50% nylon. Sizes: XS, S, M, L ..... **\$48.75/each; XL \$53.50/each**

**USAF Heavyweight Flight Jacket - Type M2B** — This is the warmest flight jacket that the military issues. It features full pile hood which drapes over the shoulders when not needed. This is the cold weather version of the Intermediate Weight Flight Jacket - Type MA1 featured elsewhere in this ad. This jacket is designed for subfreezing temperatures. Waterproof and Windproof. S, M, L **\$87.75/each; XL \$95.75**

**M-65 Field Jackets** — This is the basic issue combat jacket. Designed for complete utility, these water repellent and windproof jackets feature: 4 super large utility pockets; gusseted back for complete mobility and freedom of movement; epaulets; adjustable cuffs and collar; drawing waistband; hidden hood in collar. Brand new, of course. Sizes are XS, S, M, L, XL. Long lengths are available in Olive Drab (OD) Green and Camouflage, Woodland pattern only. If you're unsure of your size, tell us your chest measurement when ordering. XS-L ..... **\$55.00/each; XL & all long lengths ..... \$60.50/each; \$85.00/each**

**M-65 liner - Genuine GI** — designed to quickly and easily button into M-65 Jacket to provide complete warmth by sealing in the body heat. Brand New XS, S, M, L ..... **\$19.00/each; XL \$20.50/each**

**Genuine Military Insignia** — meeting all military specs

**Special Forces Flasher** (choose from: 5th Group in Vietnam; 8th; 12th; or JFK Special Warfare Center) ..... **\$1.75/each**

**Special Forces Shoulder Patch** (specify regular or subdued) ..... **\$1.75/each**  
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 Paratrooper Badge ..... **\$3.00/each**  
 Air Assault Badge ..... **\$4.00/each**  
 101st Airborne Crest ..... **\$3.00/each**  
 82nd Airborne Crest ..... **\$3.00/each**  
 101st Airborne Patch (specify regular or subdued) ..... **\$1.75/each**  
 82nd Airborne Patch (specify regular or subdued) ..... **\$1.75/each**  
 Ranger or Airborne Tabs (specify regular or subdued) **\$1.00/each**  
 Marine Recon Wing - gold plated ..... **\$4.50/each**  
 Pilot Wing, USAF - nickel plated ..... **\$3.50/each**  
 Full Bird Colonel's Rank - Army - nickel plated ..... **\$3.50/pair**  
 General's Rank-One Star-Army - nickel plated ..... **\$3.50/pair**  
 Navy Seal Badge - gold plated ..... **\$10.50/each**  
 U.S. Flag (2 x 3 1/4) ..... **\$2.25/each**  
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 For over 65 years the Kaufman name has been respected for offering the finest in genuine military goods and insignia. Our commitment to first rate service is legendary. Our service policy means:  
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to take your orders (every firm with an 800 number will do that) but we'll also be happy to answer your questions. Whether you're calling to ask about our merchandise or the status of an order you placed, we guarantee friendly, courteous service.  
 No, we're not the cheapest. But you get what you pay for. If you order the cheapest you may wait a long time for delivery of something you may ultimately be unhappy with. If you order from Kaufman's you'll see why top quality merchandise and first rate service (with a Customer Service Department always available) will squeeze the most value out of every dollar you spend. **Call Toll Free 1-800-545-0933**

## LETTERS TO RUSSIA...

Young Samantha Smith is not the only American writing fan mail to Yuri Andropov. According to the British *Intelligence Digest*, the North American office of Radio Moscow routinely invites Americans to write Russia and tell how disgusted they are with the United States government.

Just how many letters are received is debatable; Radio Moscow insists they get "millions" of letters at their offices from every state in the Union from housewives, farmers, school children, lawyers — all ordinary people who "recognize and admire the principled and consistent foreign policy of Yuri and his struggle to preserve peace."

Andropov, according to Soviet sources, has been moved to tears by the massive appeal because "he loves the American people as much as he loves the Soviet people" and has vowed to "continue the good work."

This is, of course, an important element of the Soviet disinformation and propaganda war to discredit the United States around the world. And while most Americans might be too sophisticated to be influenced by such blatant mistruths, there are a lot of people around the world who are influenced by it.

*Intelligence Digest* notes Soviet citizens could, of course, write President Reagan and complain about their government, but "there is nothing to criticize."

## SAKHAROV WRITES AMERICA...

One Russian did, however, write to the United States and complain about Soviet policy. In a letter written to U.S. Prof. Sidney Drell of Stanford University and published in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, Nobel Peace Prize winner Andrei Sakharov suggested that it might be wise for the United States to continue to strengthen its nuclear arsenal, including development of the MX.

"One should not proceed from an assumption of any special peace-loving nature in the socialist [communist] countries due to their supposed progressiveness or the horrors and losses they have experienced in war," warned the Soviet nuclear physicist, who is considered a hero in the West by nuclear-war protesters.

Sakharov recognized the appalling dangers of nuclear war in his letter and admitted it would be preferable to "reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons." But as long as the Soviets hold a "great advantage in land-based missiles," which he asserts they do, "there is very little chance of them easily relinquishing that lead. If it is necessary to

# BULLETIN BOARD

by Donna DuVall



## RUMOR CONTROL

### THE BUTLER DIDN'T DO IT...

**S**OF suspected some hanky-panky when *Comandante* Ana Maria (Melida Anaya), the number two in El Salvador's FSLN, was murdered in Managua, Nicaragua, and her death was followed quickly by the apparent suicide of FSLN Director and Ana Maria's reported lover, Comrade Salvador Cayetano Carpio, also in Managua.

Carpio, a dedicated and crafty Marxist, was the leader of the combined guerrilla movement in El Salvador. Carpio, who shot himself with a .22 — favored weapon of assassins — was buried with surprising dispatch and an amazing lack of tears on the part of the FSLN and the Sandinistas.

Shortly after his death, guerrilla tactics in El Salvador underwent a significant change.

Salvadoran guerrillas assassinated the first American adviser, Lt. Com. Albert Schaufelberger, who had been a thorn in the guerrillas' side and kept a high-profile, according to sources in El Salvador.

In addition, the guerrillas have in some areas stepped away from the highly successful amnesty program for

government troops. Under Carpio, it was standard practice for guerrillas to take weapons from captured government troops, give them the standard political briefing and send them back to their villages. Carpio's amnesty plan seemed effective since, on more than one occasion, government troops put up less than a "Remember-the-Alamo" effort when attacked.

Well, it's now a whole new game. The guerrillas in some areas have begun torturing and then shooting captured soldiers.

One knowledgeable source in El Salvador told SOF there were more than a few who wondered if the same gun that killed Carpio also killed Schaufelberger. Not literally, of course, but that the same *comandante* signed off on both "hits." He also cited the new no-prisoners policy of the guerrillas as a sure sign that they're having command problems.

The new *comandante* running the war in El Salvador has not been identified.

### ROUGH RECON FOR MERC...

**R**EMEMBER the portion of *Dogs of War* where the soldier of fortune

*Continued on page 98*



spend a few million dollars on MX missiles to alter this situation, then perhaps this is what the West should do," Sakharov recommended.

Although considered a hero in much of the world because of his heroic stance on human rights in his country, Sakharov is not a hero to the Soviet rulers. He is currently in internal exile because of his criticism of Soviet human-rights violations.

## THE PARTY'S OVER...

Soviet-controlled governments around the world are facing guerrilla uprisings in increasing numbers and seriousness. Communist governments in Angola, Afghanistan, Mozambique, Cambodia, Ethiopia and Nicaragua are being challenged by local forces intent on ridding their countries of outside influence by the East as well as the West. The Soviet role as a liberator for nationalist forces doesn't seem so convincing anymore.

## WAR AND PEACE...

All over the globe — from the Mideast to the Far East, Central America, Africa, even Europe — the world is at war in 1983. More than 40 wars are on-going, 10 *bona fide* wars and 30



insurgencies, most in the Third World, according to a study released by the Center for Defense Information in Washington.

Among the "peacetime" wars: Iraq-Iran (currently most active, in which 100,000 reportedly have been killed since 1980); Afghanistan; Lebanon; Turkey; Cambodia (bloodiest — as many as four million have died during the decade-long civil war); China-Vietnam; Philippines; Burma; El Salvador; Guatemala; Peru (look for this one to continue to intensify; rumor has it that Cuba is now offering its help to the Maoist rebels, which it hasn't done

before because it considered the rebels too unstable even for them); Namibia; Western Sahara; Angola; Chad; Northern Ireland and Spain.



## TOP CUBAN IN NICARAGUA...

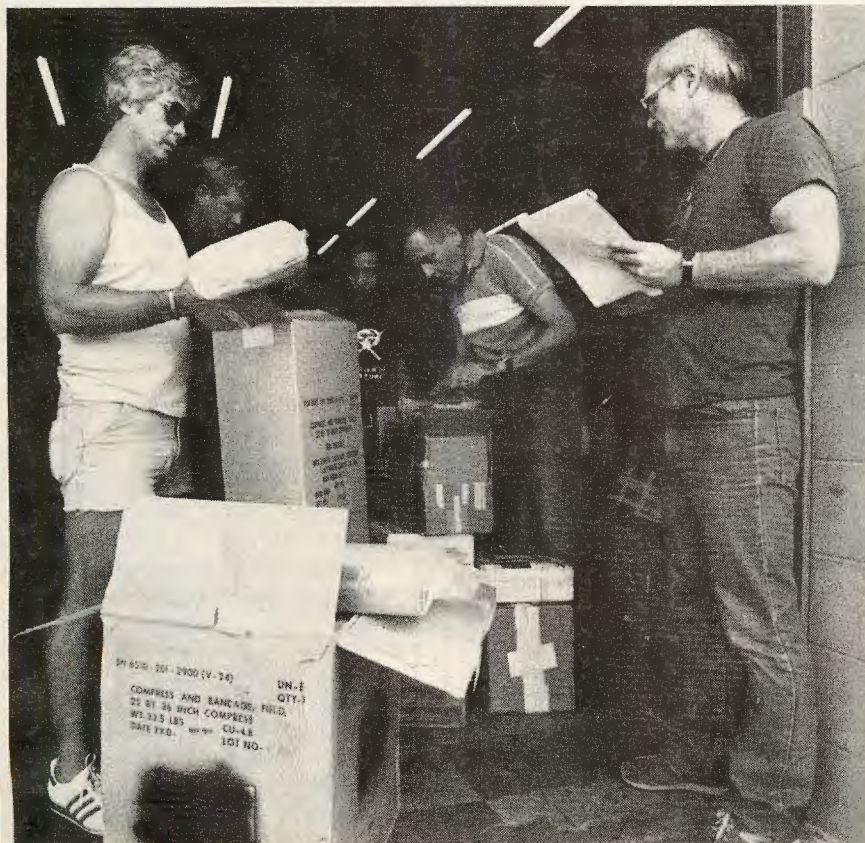
*U.S. News and World Report* reports that Cuba's top general has been sent to Nicaragua to command the Nicaraguan government forces. As the architect of Cuban military successes in Angola and Ethiopia, his presence is expected to increase confrontations with U.S.-backed Contras along the Nicaragua-Honduran border.

## COSTA RICA UPDATE...

"Terrorist crimes will increase in the next months," warned Eduardo Aguilar Bloise, director general of Costa Rica's Judicial Investigation Organization (OIJ).

Costa Rica, as reported in "Costa Rica: A Domino in Line" in August's SOF, has become a target of Cuban/Nicaraguan/Salvadoran terrorists. Said Bloise in a recent press interview: "We have been converted into a type of Lebanon. All the groups involved in the Caribbean conflict operate in our country. In Costa Rica, actions are planned that are carried out here or in other countries."

Soon after the OIJ chief issued this warning, a bomb exploded in a parked



SOFers (left to right) Tom Reisinger, Special Projects Assistant; Bill Brooks, Associate Editor; Giang La Bang, Mail Foreman; Alex McColl, Special Projects Coordinator and Robert K. Brown, Editor/Publisher, inventory and pack donated medical supplies to be shipped to Nicaraguan Contras. Photo: Bill Guthrie

*Continued on page 99*



# SSG



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THE SSG HAS PROVEN ITSELF IN MORE THAN 58 NATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AS THE PRIME COUNTER SNIPER RIFLE IN SPECIALIZED LAW ENFORCEMENT, SECURITY & MILITARY UNITS!



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Each rifle features guaranteed performance. It is a weapon that has stood the test against the world's terrorism. The SSG is unmatched in price. Some of its features are: Cold, hammer forged from special Steyr steel; Synthetic stock is impervious to weather conditions and will not alter its point of impact under most adverse temperature changes; A choice of adjustable single or the unique double trigger systems (1st trigger acts as normal or the rear trigger can set the front trigger with a crisp 2-8 oz. pull). A rifle of comparable quality would have to be custom made and cost upwards of \$1,500.00, whereas we can offer this rifle at an affordable price of \$812.00 *Note: SSG shown with optional Kahles ZF69 scope and NATO quick detachable scope mounts featuring locking levers and scope rings to accommodate any U.S. or foreign made 1" tube scopes.*

### THE SPECIFICATIONS ARE:

- Caliber .....7.62 x 51 NATO (308 Winchester)
- Barrel Length.....65cm (25.6 inches)
- Overall Length .....113cm (44.5 inches)
- Length of Pull.....32.5-35.5cm (12.8-14 inches)
- Weight of Rifle Complete with ZF 691A.....4.5kg (10 lbs.)
- Action.....Cylindrical bolt with 6 locking lugs
- Magazine.....5-shot rotary drum-type magazine
- Weight of Magazine Loaded .....190g (6.7 oz.)
- Weight of Magazine Empty .....65g (2.3 oz.)

Equipped with standard NATO dovetail receiver to interchange standard and night vision scopes.

*THE SSG - The best kept secret in the world!*



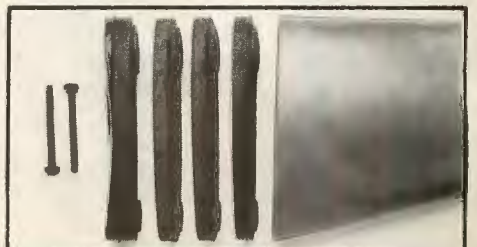
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MATCH CROWN WITH MUZZLE COVER



ADJUSTABLE STOCK LENGTH

UNLESS you are willing to drag around a 10-pound Thompson or watch 950 rounds per minute go down the barrel of a MAC 10, submachine guns, in the Western world, mean 9mm Parabellum.

The cartridge needs no defense from me. The tens of thousands slain in battles too numerous to mention are adequate testimony of its potential.

For practice sessions, any of the surplus Czech, Yugoslav or Finnish ammunition floating around will suffice. Their occasional misfires are of little consequence under these conditions, and, in fact, provide valuable experience in clearing stoppages. Moving up the ladder, PMC and the Portuguese ammunition now arriving on the market are reasonably priced, sure-fire and adequate. But, when loading magazines for serious confrontations, price is of no importance — only performance counts.

What does the job in your pistol will always do for your submachine gun, right? Wrong. Some of the parameters are not only different, but opposing.

Expanding bullets have ushered in a new era in pistol-caliber wound ballistics, but hollow-point bullet shapes and sharp cavity lips are more likely to cause feeding malfunctions. Target energy deposit and lethality have been increased by expanding bullets. But some hollow-point designs do not feed reliably through pistols or submachine guns. Their effectiveness is further diminished by the increasing use of body armor since they cannot usually defeat Threat Level IIA vests. And, as they violate the Hague Convention, hollow-points are not acceptable for military use.

In general, submachine guns operate best with "hot" ammunition. For a given bullet weight, satisfactory SMG cartridges are loaded to provide higher velocities than those required — or sometimes safe — for pistols. In the military, a compromise is usually sought to avoid carrying two separate rounds in the inventory. The balance can be delicate since ammunition developed for use exclusively in submachine guns will eventually batter alloy-frame pistols into oblivion.

On the other side of the coin, lightly loaded pistol ammunition is often inadequate to furnish the recoil energy necessary to drive a massive SMG bolt back far enough to engage the sear. When this happens, "short cycling" will result and the gun will continue to fire until the magazine is empty, if in the full-auto mode, or constantly "double" when fired semiautomatically.

Can you buy 9mm ammunition that offers high performance in submachine guns? Yes. There are several alternatives. Which is best? Our test and evaluation, using the robust and reliable Sterling L2A3 (MK 4) submachine gun, furnished some interesting data.

The Sterling was chosen as a worst-case scenario. Any ammunition that will drive its heavy bolt fully rearward will operate any other submachine gun. The fine HK MP5 would have been a poor test weapon since even mild U.S. commercial 9mm ammuni-



by Peter G. Kokalis

# FULL AUTO PERFORMANCE CHOICES FOR SMG AMMO

tion will propel its extremely light bolt.

The Remington 124-grain full-metal-jacket (FMJ) round was included as it represents typical U.S. commercial loadings. As expected, it's not very hot. The average velocity was only 1,177 fps (feet per second) through the Sterling's 7.8-inch barrel. Remington's quality-control standards are high and the standard deviation was only 11 fps. Thus accuracy potential was also high. But this cartridge is woefully underloaded for submachine-gun use and short cycling occurred frequently. Feeding was satisfactory and no stoppages were observed.

The highly touted Federal 115-grain jacketed hollow-point just doesn't hack it in most submachine guns. Not one round fired supplied enough recoil impulse to drive the Sterling's bolt past the sear. Accurate (standard deviation was only 10 fps) and lethal on soft targets, there were no feeding problems, but save this gentle round for your Beretta 92SB. The average velocity was only 1,206 fps.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Winchester marketed a 115-grain FMJ 9mm cartridge in a white box clearly marked "FOR USE IN SUB-MACHINE GUNS." That's no hype as it averaged 1,326 fps out of the L2A3. No short cycling occurred and feeding was positive. Unfortunately, this is of academic interest only, because most of these cartridges have long ago disappeared.

Magnum Research, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 2825 Anthony Lane South, Minneapolis, MN 55418) imports the Israeli Military Industries 115-grain FMJ submachine-gun cartridge under the Eagle brand. Labeled for "carbine" use only and color-coded with a black tip, it's hot (an average of 1,335 fps) and accurate (standard deviation is only 22 fps). Made for the UZI, it's a superior choice for any submachine gun.

Two loadings manufactured by GECO Division of Dynamit Nobel in Germany were tested. They are distributed in the United States by Check-Mate Arms Co. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 996, Oak View, CA 93022) and both are Berdan-primed, but non-corrosive.

The GECO 124-grain ball round is an excellent compromise for use in both pistols and submachine guns. A favorite of the GSG9, the box is labeled "*fur Pistolen and Maschinenpistolen.*" This ammunition operated the L2A3 smoothly and reliably, with plenty of energy to drive the Sterling bolt completely rearward, yet mild enough (average velocity was 1,227 fps) for use in your pistol. It is quite accurate also, as the standard deviation was only 11 fps.

Most innovative was the GECO Action Safety ammunition. The solid-copper alloy projectile contains a sharp-ridged hollow-point plugged with a plastic core to achieve positive feeding. The plastic nose cap separates from the bullet's body while still in the bore and falls to the ground several meters beyond the muzzle. The BAT (Blitz Action Trauma) safety bullet weighs only 85 grains and it really moves out. One round actually clocked 1,500 fps and the average velocity was 1,468 fps! Developed for close-range target engagement, the BAT's velocity falls off quickly. It's ideally suited for urban fighting, where it will minimize ricochets. The light bullet's softer recoil impulse caused occasional doubling in the L2A3, but it fed perfectly.

What are my choices? The BAT for close-in, soft targets; the IMI black-tipped ball round in military environments and when the use of body armor may be anticipated; and the GECO 124-grain ball cartridge when pistol and SMG ammo compatibility is important. ☒

TABLE I

9mm Parabellum Chronograph Results

Instrument: Oehler Model 33.

Temperature: 60 degrees F.

All measurements in feet per second. Instrumental velocities taken eight feet from muzzle.

	Average	Standard Deviation	Low Velocity	High Velocity	Extreme Spread
Remington 124-gr. FMJ	1177	11	1162	1195	33
Federal 115-gr. Jacketed HP Winchester (SMG load)	1206	10	1193	1223	30
115-gr. FMJ Eagle 115-gr. FMJ Carbine	1326	35	1252	1375	123
GECO BAT	1335	22	1308	1387	79
85-gr. HP GECO	1468	28	1435	1500	65
124-gr. FMJ	1227	11	1205	1246	41

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*In the next 60 seconds,  
an embassy in the hands  
of terrorists will be recaptured  
by a fighting force  
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warning, kill without hesitation,  
and disappear without a trace.*

*They are the final option-  
and their time is now!*

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**Coming Soon To A Theatre Near You!**

# EDITORIAL

## LEST WE FORGET

by Smith Hempstone

**H**IS name is cut into Line 94 of Panel 31 (West): Edwin A. Keeble, Jr.

As you face the panel — here and there against the panels rest campaign ribbons, candles, roses, small American flags and, because it was the Christmas season, wreaths and sprigs of holly — the Lincoln Memorial is to your left and the Washington Monument, with the dome of Congress in the background, over your right shoulder. It is hallowed ground, and thus an apt place to inscribe the names of heroes.

Ed Keeble would, of course, have laughed at the notion he was a hero. He had enlisted in the Marines because his country was at war, and it did not seem right to him (a graduate of the Deerfield Academy and Princeton) that it should be fought only by the underprivileged.

He had gone to OCS and accepted a commission because that seemed the natural thing to do. He had gone on to flight school and become a Huey gunship pilot because choppers were the cavalry of his war. In another age, he would have ridden with Prince Eugene's hussars.

No, the handsome first lieutenant from Bronxville, married for little more than a year, would not have claimed to be a hero. He was simply a Marine whose luck ran out in February of 1969 on a medevac mission along the Laotian border. His chopper, chewed up by .50-caliber groundfire, fell like a stone not far from the wounded Marines he was trying to save. He was 25 when he died.

Like all the 57,692 names inscribed on the black granite walls that form a broad V below the surface of the ground, those on Line 94 say a lot about America: James J. Johnson, Edwin A. Keeble, Jr., Richard W. Kethune, Vito Vitro, Donald J. Krajewski. Youngsters of diverse national origins, disparate faiths and different skin pigmentation united by duty, love of country and one another and, finally, by death.

**T**HE Vietnam War Memorial looks — and is — unfinished. An American flag and a statuary group of three grunts (two white and one black) will be added later. They are needed: The memorial now too much resembles a shallow grave. It speaks of human sacrifice and regrets, but not of ideals.

The memorial commemorates the memory of young men like Ed Keeble who died in an

unpopular war that went on too long, and was waged for ends that the government of the day never succeeded in articulating convincingly.

But the fact that the war was unpopular does not mean it was unjust. Those who fought and died there did so no less bravely than those who gave their lives at Saratoga or New Orleans, at Antietam or San Juan Hill, at Normandy Beach or Heartbreak Ridge. Nor were they ever — ever — defeated by the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese. There were more widows in Hanoi than in Hamtramick after Tet.

They were defeated by their own countrymen: by the preachers and college professors who told young Americans it was all right to break the law, by those of their own generation who skipped off to Canada or Sweden, by the politicians who insisted on meddling in the war and the generals who fought it stupidly from the safety of their air-conditioned trailers.

**W**AS it worth it? Ask the Cambodians, 30 percent of whose people were slaughtered after the war was lost. Ask the Laotian hill tribes, whose people even now are being butchered by Soviet chemical warfare toxins. Ask the hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese sent to "re-education" camps, and those who risked death on the high seas to escape the "liberators" from the north. Ask those Vietnamese today working as slaves in Siberia to build the pipeline.

Ed Keeble and those like him who died in Vietnam, wise beyond their years, knew that no man gets to choose his war, and that few are very pleasant. They understood that those who prize their own skins more than their duty to their country always can think of reasons why a war is unjust.

In the end, whenever war comes, the populace is divided between those who recognize their obligations and those who stress their rights; those who get into uniform and those who prefer to make the uniforms; those who go and those who stay behind. The former are not just different from the latter, they are better.

Ed Keeble was privileged to die as he had lived, honorably and in the company of men. When he fell, he fell an eagle. And since we all owe God a death, it's better to be a dead eagle than a live cow.

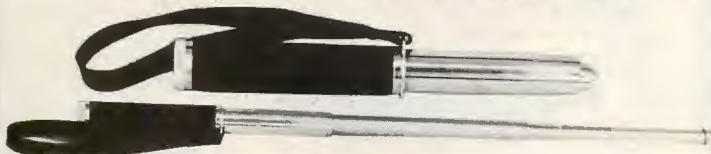
The memorial is *almost* finished, Ed, and the war is over. Rest easy, Marine. ☩

*Smith Hempstone is a newsman who now devotes his time writing commentary on world affairs and syndicating it to American newspapers. This article is reprinted with permission from the 29 December 1982 issue of the Washington Times.*

# Timberwolf

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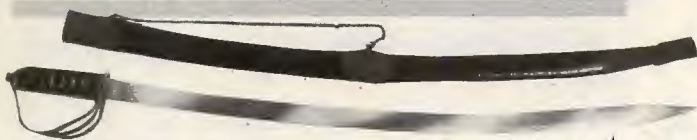
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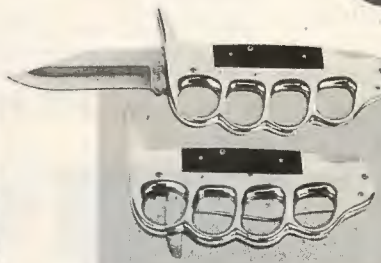
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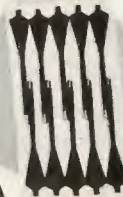
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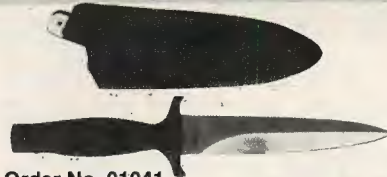


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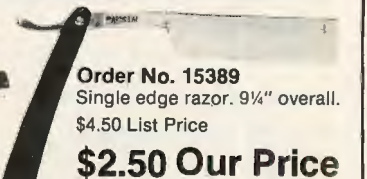


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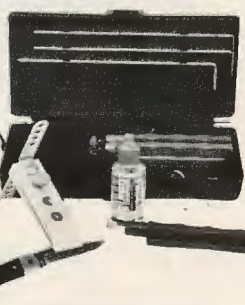
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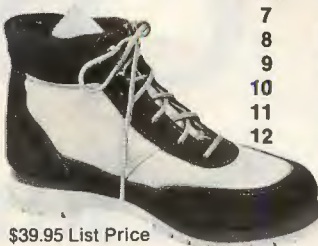
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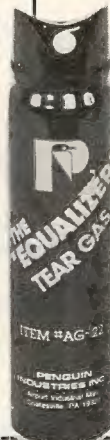
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# VIETNAM CHARADES

## Serious Child's Play



by Wayne "Raw" Hyde

IT was mid-1966, and I'd spent a few days covering the Big Red One's operations in III Corps. This was to be my last day with them; the following morning I would return to Saigon for another assignment. I was Vietnam's "resident correspondent" for the *Voice of America*, assigned to Vietnam for an 18-month hitch — a job I had asked for.

We had been on a platoon-sized sweep through the morning, which had turned out to be mostly negative, except for a handful of Cong who fired a few scattered shots at us without doing any harm and then promptly disappeared. Now it was midafternoon and we were to return to base.

We got a radio message that two trucks were being sent to bring us back. No one questioned this; we took it as a welcome surprise. But the truck drivers got themselves lost, and it was at least two hours before they finally showed up.

We all climbed in and started back. I was standing in the first truck with perhaps half of the platoon. It was crowded, but the ride was a relief from walking. And then the lead

driver got himself lost again. "This guy must be new here," someone observed. "Asshole," he added.

So there we were, two trucks full of soldiers winding this way and that on rutted dirt roads that seemed to lead nowhere. The lost driver was the object of some unprintable commentary, until he abruptly turned left onto a fairly good road. Now we sped up a bit — and suddenly came upon a small village to the right of the road. From what I could see, there weren't more than 40 huts in it. Rifles went up at the ready, and it got pretty quiet in the back of the truck.

Then small children came running toward us. They stopped in a clearing probably 40 or more yards from the road and waved and shouted and smiled at us.

Some of us waved back.

"Only kids," said a lanky PFC standing just behind the truck's cab. "No adults, just kids. That's funny. How come no adults?"

### "RAW" HYDE RIDER

Wayne "Raw" Hyde was a paratrooper with the 17th Airborne Division during World War II. He later spent a total of nine years in Vietnam, part of it as a civilian member of SOG, and part as a correspondent for *Voice of America*.

During his nine years in Vietnam, Hyde took "a few hundred" notes on his experiences and observations of the people of Vietnam. This is the first time his writing has appeared in SOF, but we hope that it will not be the last. Keep them doggies rollin', Raw.

Only seconds later we knew why. The seven or eight small children suddenly opened their mouths wide and stuck their fingers in their ears. They stared at us, wide-eyed, not moving now.

"Jesus Christ!" the lanky soldier yelled. "Stop the truck!" He banged on the roof of the cab with his rifle butt. "Stop the goddam truck right now!" he screamed.

The driver stood on his brakes and we stopped, as did the truck following us. "What the hell's goin' on?" the driver wanted to know.

"Out of the trucks!" the PFC yelled. "Get off the rear end. Don't nobody get in front of the goddam truck! There are mines in the road!"

We piled off. Very carefully, but very quickly. We moved off the road toward the village, some of the men dropping to prone positions, and every weapon in the two-truck convoy covered the village. The children were still there, looking frightened but staying where they were, their fingers out of their ears now.

In just a few minutes, three adults — two

men and a woman — came hurrying toward us from the village. One of the men, apparently a village leader, spoke to us in Vietnamese. He got no response, so he tried French. A soldier from the second truck translated the frightened words of the Vietnamese man.

The VC, he said, had seen the two trucks pass the village on the way to pick us up. Apparently thinking that we had to return the same way, they planted two mines in the road. We would have been warned, said the villager, except that the Cong had stayed in the village until they saw the trucks stop and saw us get off. Then they got out of there. The villagers had not known that the children came to the road, nor, apparently, had the VC until we got off the trucks.

The village woman took that as her cue to point fingers at the now sober-faced kids and yell up a storm as she followed them back into the village.

"Everybody was too damned scared to come out," the translator said. "Scared of the Charlies and scared of the mines."

The two mines were located quickly

enough, and disarmed. They were approximately 20 yards from where the lead truck had stopped. I went to find the lanky PFC who had shouted the warning. I asked him how he knew what was going on, how he knew the mines were there.

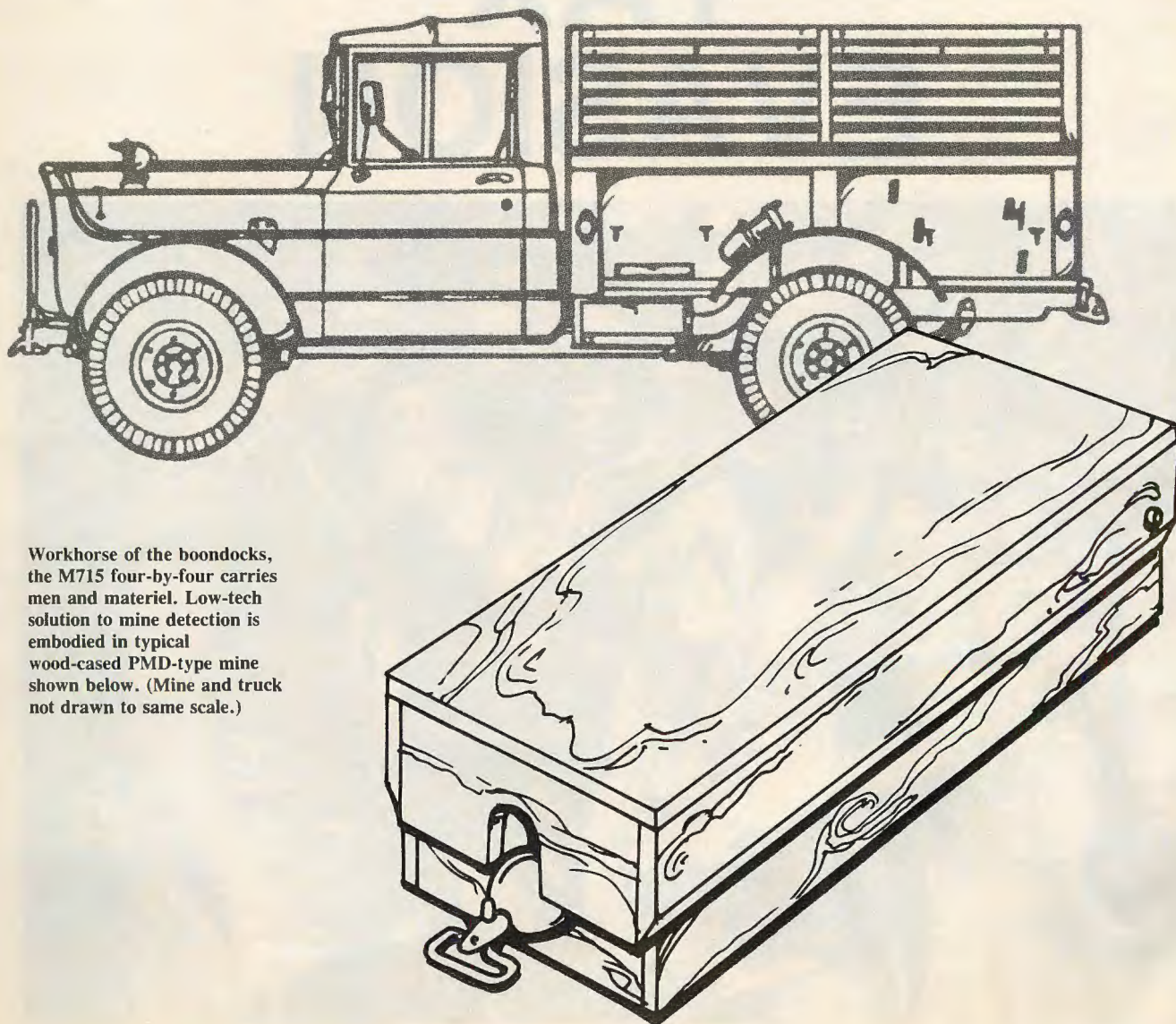
"I saw this happen before," he said. "The minute those kids opened their mouths and stuck their fingers in their ears, I knew what it meant. It's for damned sure those kids saw it happen before, too. How else would they know enough to open their mouths and cover their ears? Man, you gotta watch those kids!"

Then he shrugged. "Well, hell, they don't know any better, but they were too damned close to the road themselves."

"Where did you see this happen before?" I asked.

"This is my second tour in 'Nam," he said. Then he shrugged again and added, "I was a sergeant then."

I never did find out if the PFC won himself a promotion for what he did that day. I hope he got his stripes back. ☘



Workhorse of the boondocks, the M715 four-by-four carries men and materiel. Low-tech solution to mine detection is embodied in typical wood-cased PMD-type mine shown below. (Mine and truck not drawn to same scale.)

**D**URING Operation Rose our reconnaissance unit (the Currahee Shock Force of the 3/506 Infantry [Airborne], 101st Airborne Division) was inserted into mountainous terrain some 35 klicks southwest of Phan Rang, not very far from the South China Sea. Our mission was to scout the hills in search of enemy-used caves, locate weapons and equipment caches and to pinpoint Viet Cong units. On the evening of 16 November 1967, we were contacted on the PRC-25 and told to prepare for extraction the following morning. The next day, helicopters airlifted our team back to base camp just outside of Phan Rang where we were briefed on the following situation:

The Viet Cong shadow government was operating, with impunity, a tax collection point located along Highway One, approximately 11 kilometers west of Ca Na, a small coastal village in Ninh Thuan Province. Forward Air Controllers, patrolling the Area of Operations in their O-1s, spotted the VC stopping local road traffic. There wasn't much the FACs could do to interfere, however. The use of air strikes was out of

the question because of the obvious danger to the many civilians standing around their halted busses and trucks. Helicopter gunships and slicks couldn't be used for the same reason. On a few occasions troopers aboard M60-mounted jeeps had been rushed — albeit to no avail — toward the tax point. Each time the VC security element somehow signaled a warning to their officials, who then quickly dispersed.

The mounting frustration of failure led to a new approach to the problem. Our team, all volunteers drawn from the Currahee Shock Force, to be known for this special operation as Task Force Sweet Pea, would try a more innovative method of attack. On the morning of 18 November, the team leader, a captain known as Paladin, with myself and one other NCO, traveled to downtown Phan Rang. There, the local U.S. Navy intelligence officer — looking really out of place standing on the street in his pretty black silk pajamas — pointed to two busses waiting to begin the day's business.

Dressed in plain civilian clothes I entered the first bus, with a Smith & Wesson .38

partially hidden beneath my shirt. I directed the driver, who, it quickly became apparent, knew absolutely nothing about what was going on, to drive his bus to our base camp, just south of Phan Rang. The other trooper directed the second bus driver to do likewise. Little did I realize that we were actually hijacking the busses.

Once the drivers stopped at our camp, Paladin told them that the busses would be used for most of the day and that there was nothing to sweat because they would be compensated for lost business (each would receive 15,000 piasters). The undaunted drivers, hoping to strike a better bargain, began arguing for a lot more. The confused shouting — a mixture of pidgin English, Vietnamese and American slang — suddenly ended when Paladin let the heavy bolt of his M3 submachine gun fly forward. The two drivers, now pacified, were comfortably incarcerated while the team was gone.

After some initial confusion, a squad from our shock force, all dressed in nondescript mufti, climbed aboard both busses. Atop the first sat a guy from Hawaii, a

# TAX EVASION



Japanese-American who was dressed in cotton peasant clothes, with his M60 machine gun hidden beneath a pile of rice sacks.

I then took the wheel and drove the bus onto Highway One, proceeding with the other bus toward the tax point. Some distance down the almost obliterated road, I suddenly realized that the bridge ahead was missing its span. Swerving to the right and quickly down-shifting gears, I struggled to slow down the brakeless bus. Below the destroyed bridge on a temporary bypass was a speed bump followed by a simple concrete span across the shallow river.

As the bus hit the speed bump and I concentrated on the narrow span, one of the troopers, sitting in the back with his finger on his M16's trigger, discharged a burst of automatic fire. It was pure luck that the barrel pointed outside the open window. I decided then and there to turn the driving over to the lone Vietnamese who accompanied us. He had told us earlier that he was merely a school teacher who was on this mission because he wanted to do something for his country. His cool manner and the .45

automatic tucked in his belt seemed to point to both a different profession and a less altruistic reason for his presence.

Continuing down the road, the bus rounded a turn and drove past a VC soldier who, partially hidden within the roadside foliage, quickly scrutinized the "passengers." Inside the bus team members sunk down low in their seats, hoping that the conical straw hats they wore would conceal their obviously non-Oriental features.

Rounding the next bend, we saw a small clearing alongside the road. There, busses, trucks, drivers and passengers crowded both sides of the road. In their midst stood a VC official, his M2 Carbine hanging at the ready, motioning for the bus to come to a halt where he stood.

As our driver struggled to stop, the VC paid more attention to the bus than to the passengers. Only at the very last moment, when he stood a short distance in front of the vehicle, did the tax collector really take a long, hard look inside.

His expression changed dramatically when he realized he had been had. As he

quickly brought his M2 Carbine up to firing position, the driver ducked and two troopers, myself from the right side and Sgt. De La Rosa from the left, opened up and cut down the VC tax collector. Everyone then quickly left the bus to pursue the other VC who began running into the surrounding woods.

The shock force was unable to take the fleeing VC under fire, so an overhead FAC put in an A-1E with napalm. Other members of the task force in the meantime, carefully checking the Vietnamese along the roadside, discovered one woman trying to conceal a very large amount of money. Her purpose, it was later established, was to hide the collected taxes in the event of attack. The fighting over and the tax point neutralized, the Currahee Shock Force returned first to the base camp and then back up in the hills for some more action with Charlie. ☒

# AIRBORNE STYLE

**LEFT:** Author Waxman (left) with three other members of Currahee Shock Force, 3/506 Infantry (Airborne), 101st Airborne Division. **BELOW:** Member of Task Force Sweet Pea with M16 looks at former tax collector after rough day. **RIGHT:** Task Force Sweet Pea trooper at scene of tax collection point after neutralization.

by John Waxman



# SOF and the Buddhist Uprising

## BAD NIGHT AT TIEN HOI PAGODA

by Bob Poos

Photos courtesy of Wide World

**U**NDoubtedly the most foolish thing I ever did in my life was go to the Tien Hoi Pagoda that beautiful, hot, sunny day in Da Nang, Vietnam, during the Buddhist uprising of 1966.

During almost 14 years with the Associated Press, I was involved in many unusual circumstances but never before nor since anything like the Buddhist revolt.

At the time, the ARVN (Army, Republic of Vietnam) and the U.S. Army and Marines were fighting the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese regulars. Two wars in one, if you will.

Then Tich — which means The Venerable — Tri Quang, a diabolical madman who also happened to be the most powerful Buddhist monk in South Vietnam, decreed that his fellow religionists would revolt against the government of then-Premier Nguyen Cao Ky.

So that made it a third war. All very confusing if you were a war correspondent.

Some devout Buddhists in the South Vietnamese Army defected and became rebels against their government. A large portion of these were from the ARVN First Division in I Corps, the northernmost military corps in Vietnam.

Buddhist-government fighting ended pretty quickly in the Saigon area — III Corps — because the palace guard was fiercely loyal to whatever government was in power at the time. It never really got much momentum in IV Corps, the Mekong Delta area, or II Corps in the central part of the country. The troops had more important



**LEFT:** Buddhist dissident soldier, who threw three hand grenades at ARVN Marines, surrenders after running out of them. **RIGHT:** ARVN Marines search dead dissident. After man's surrender, Marines escorted him to their captain who asked if he was the grenade thrower. Told yes, captain whipped out .38-cal. revolver and shot him in the heart, killing him instantly. SOF Executive Editor Bob Poos took these photos while combat correspondent/photographer for AP.



**“Bob, if this crate is full of heavy machinery, we’re in good shape. But if it’s a crate load of cornflakes, we’re in deep shit.”**



things to do there; they were literally besieged by the VC and North Vietnamese hard hats.

But Eye Corps, as we called it, was a different story because of the well-trained and disciplined First Division troops who went over to the Buddhist cause.

The fighting in Da Nang went on for a good two weeks. And street fighting in cities is a dirty, dangerous business. I suppose I came close to getting killed about 50 times while dashing from one doorway to another and trying to take pictures with my Nikon all the while.

I recall one incident in particular. Col. Tom Fields, commander of the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Information Bureau in Da Nang, volunteered one day to accompany me as sort of a camera bearer. We blundered into an area directly between the Buddhist rebels and the ARVN Marines, all of whom had remained loyal to the government, or rather to their charismatic commander, Col. Yen.

Caught in a crossfire, Tom and I dove behind a huge crate which had recently been unloaded from a U.S. Navy freighter.

Rifle and machine-gun bullets began thudding into the crate. Tom wryly observed: “Bob, if this crate is full of heavy machinery, we’re in good shape. But if it’s a crate load of cornflakes, we’re in deep shit.”

But, that anecdote aside, the rebellion soon began to draw to a close in Eye Corps. The ARVN Marines were simply too good, too tough, too well-disciplined, too well-armed and too dedicated to Col. Yen. They began to pen up the Buddhists who still had the will to fight inside the Tien Hoi Pagoda complex.

Those of us who were combat correspondents in the Da Nang press corps could interpret clearly what was going to happen and we all figured it would be over with the next day.

So we had a little *dinner party* in the Combat Information Bureau (CIB) courtyard—ate steaks and drank a lot of beer. As we were finishing the meal, a boy, maybe 10 or 12 years old, came dashing up to us. He announced that the Buddhist monks in the pagoda had an important announcement for us reporters.

Those of us who were either brave or nuts decided to check it out. We followed the kid into the pagoda grounds.

After about a half hour inside, with the monks having absolutely no statement to

## I said to the others: "For God's sake, don't stop walking now or we're all dead men."

make, some of us decided, correctly, that what they intended to do was hold us hostage so the ARVN Marines in their rage would not kill them all. Probably a correct assumption on the monks' part.

But some of us who were more experienced at covering this weird war decided we had had enough of being hostages. It was dark by now and we figured that if we put on a display of false bravado, we could escape.

Myself, Alain Taieb of *Paris Match*, Tim Page of *Time/Life* and Steve VanMeter of UPI decided to simply walk out the pagoda's gate. As we did, I heard the loudest sound I have ever heard in my life: A Buddhist rebel pulled back the bolt of a Browning light machine gun and let it snap forward, loading the piece.

I said to the others: "For God's sake, don't stop walking now or we're all dead men." They wordlessly agreed and we kept moving, finally reaching the ring of ARVN Marine tanks and APCs that encircled the pagoda.

The Marines knew all of us well because we had been with them for many days and they laughed and waved as we passed through their lines.

It was then that the Buddhists realized that they were losing a sizable portion of their hostages. They got mad and unleashed a storm of rifle and machine-gun fire. The four of us made a dash for a walled house, broke open the gate and took refuge inside. Although bullets chipped into the walls, we were protected from them.

Then the Buddhists opened up with a mortar and M79 (bloop tube) barrage. One round hit the branches of a tree directly over our heads and exploded. The shrapnel hit all of us. (Navy doctors who X-rayed me later counted 27 pieces of copper and steel in me.) A shard slit Page's throat and I, stunned, took off my jacket and used it as a bandage. It was probably the most unselfish act I have ever done in my life.

Another shard slashed a tendon in Taieb's right leg and he screamed in pain. VanMeter was not seriously injured, but was knocked unconscious by the blast.

Bleeding and in shock, I was certain that my hours on this earth were numbered. Page, Taieb, VanMeter and I crawled together to discuss how we could escape from this desperate predicament. None of us had an answer. We were all going to die, all of us were certain of that, and, as it sometimes happens at such times, none of us particularly cared. If one must die, it is best

to do it in such excellent company.

So we lay there, bleeding and dazed, and waited to die.

However, just then up galloped the equivalent of the U.S. Cavalry, in this case three United States Marine officers.

I shall never forget them or their ranks at the time: They were Maj. Andy Anderson (an adviser with the ARVN Marines), Maj. Mike Styles and Warrant Officer Fred Tucker of the CIB.

They had somehow gotten word that some of their friends were wounded and trapped behind opposing lines. (The ARVN Marines had wisely pulled back.)

Armed only with a .45 ACP pistol each and very loud voices, the three yelled at the Buddhists, "If you don't let those people go, Lew Walt (commander of the Third Marine Amphibious Force) is going to send in a battalion of U.S. Marines and waste you bastards." They had no authority to back up their threat. The American military was remaining neutral in this episode. But the bluff worked. The Buddhists ceased firing.

I talked to Andy Anderson, now retired from the Marines and a bank executive in New Orleans, the other day and he said: "I'll never forget seeing that courtyard full of wounded people. I thought you, and maybe we, were all done for."

But Andy loaded Taieb and Page into a jeep and headed for Charley Med, the U.S. Marine hospital. Fred Tucker took me and VanMeter to the ARVN Marine aid station.

There, an ARVN Marine corpsman probed my wounds, and gave me an enormous shot of penicillin and morphine.

Col. Yen, an old friend, came in to talk. I seldom lose my temper but I did this time and I said: "Col. Yen, if you'll let me, I'll lead the charge into that goddamned pagoda tomorrow."

The colonel laughed and said: "You're not going to be leading any charges. What you're going to do is have a drink." He produced a bottle of Jack Daniels.

The drink did it. Coupled with the injection and the expiration of shock, I passed out to be awakened the next morning on a litter being transferred to a C-130 that eventually took me to the Navy hospital in Saigon.

Taieb and Page were treated at Charley Med and eventually released.

All of us probably would have died had it not been for the audacity of three very brave Marines.

Thanks, Andy, Mike and Fred. ☒



ARVN paratroopers move in to aid government Marines clean up after Buddhist rebels surrendered in Da Nang, which saw violent street battles before surrender.



SOF Executive Editor Bob Poos — then AP combat correspondent/photographer — bleeding and in shock after being knocked unconscious by Buddhist rebel grenade outside Tien Hoi Pagoda in Da Nang.

ARVN Marine officer examines weapons captured by Marines after surrender of Buddhist dissidents in Da Nang. Weapons are mostly M1s, U.S. Carbines, Browning Automatic Rifles, Browning .30-cal. machine guns — but note two Browning .50s and two Thompson SMGs (right rear).



**“If you don’t let those people go, Lew Walt (commander of the Third Marine Amphibious Force) is going to send in a battalion of U.S. Marines and waste you bastards.”**



# PIN WARS '83

## Blackard Kingpin at Second Chance

by Jake Jatras

**B**OWLING pins have always been an object of fascination with Richard Davis of Second Chance Body Armor. As a child, he had one for a playmate. He wanted to *take* one to the junior prom, but he couldn't keep the corsage on it. Finally, depressed after he couldn't find any batteries to fit his favorite pin, he did the only thing left to do — he shot it. It was so much fun that soon he invited all of his friends up to Central Lake, Mich., to engage in his new pastime: pin blasting!

Pin Wars '83 attracted 348 guys and gals to Second Chance's annual saturnalia. A week of shooting, drinking, eating, nightly movies and live music — all for just a \$135 entry fee, a real bargain as far as shooting matches go.

Many matches advertise large cash awards, trophies, etc., but nobody (and I mean nobody) lays out as many guns (over 120) and other loot in as many classes as Davis & Company.

The matches stayed basically the same as in past years with the five-pin event remaining the crown jewel. Shooters stand facing a four-foot by eight-foot table, 40 inches off the ground at 25 feet. On the famous command, "Guns on the rail!" shooters get ready for the start gun. The object is simple: Shoot the standard bowling pins off the table, your time is your score.

Competitors shot six tables and the best five runs were counted for score. The .45 auto remained the most popular weapon, but extended magazines and eight rounders were not *permitted*.

Jim Blackard of Claremore, Okla., proved how he earned his "Master Blaster" status by setting *the* pace with a record 19.0 seconds for five runs — incredible time. Second place Mike Murray of Ohio came in at 21.0 seconds flat, a full two seconds behind the champ.

Mag-Na-Port of Mt. Clemens, Mich., made some custom Second Chance Commemorative Smith & Wesson Model 29s and Blackard received one, plus a trophy, as the winner. For using Bianchi Leather, "Darth" Blackard also received \$1,120 cash.

Bob Denny of Cedar Falls, Iowa, was third at 21.0; Jim Swain of Memphis, Ten-



1983 Master of the Pins, Jim "Darth" Blackard of Oklahoma, displays his Second Chance Commemorative S&W M-29 and First Place trophy. Photo: Lynn Schoening

nessee, fourth also with a 21.0 and Lloyd "Venus" Harper fifth at 21.5. Denny took home a PMA Commemorative and the others HK-91s.

Team events? You bet. In the three-person team event for men, one shooter was allowed a pistol, one a pump shotgun and one an auto smoothbore. Dave Stanford,

Bill Wilson and Cory Adelson took the test with a time of 5.5 seconds to take out the eight pins. Each netted a Second Chance Commemorative M-29.

Nine teams entered and all got great prizes. Second and third place teams received HK-91s, fourth place Colt Pythons and an S&W .41 Magnum. Fifth place team members received Ruger Mini-14s and a Remington 1100. Down the line were Ruger pistols, Iver Johnson .30 carbines, Charter Arms, Winchester ammo and Bianchi Leather.

*Soldier of Fortune* backed the winners of the women's team competition. Annette Aysen, Cathy Behlert and Kathy Goodall turned in a winning time of 10.0 seconds. Aysen used a pair of M-29s, Behlert a 12-gauge Benelli and Goodall a 12-bore Remington 1100. Each received two ¼-carat diamonds.

In the eight pin unlimited Jerry Miculek of Louisiana took first with 8.1 seconds and won an SC Commemorative. Elliot Aysen was close behind at 8.3 and went home with an HK-91. Oklahoma's Jim Highley won a Browning P-35 for his time of 8.5 seconds.

The eight-pin "four-inch" event was limited to six-shot revolvers with no modifications — no heavy barrels, add-on ribs, etc. One reload was mandatory using either a speed loader or a "moon" clip. Elliot Aysen came out on top with a 7.9 second run, followed by Jerry Miculek with an 8.6. Aysen added an SC Commemorative to his collection and Miculek an HK-91. The top eight all received guns.

The "Banzai Charge Bang and Clang" pits shooters with their shotguns loaded with slugs against steel "tank" targets. Dave Stanford, a retired police officer from Seattle, Wash., zipped through this course in 22.2 seconds followed by John Shaw of Tennessee at 23.0. One more SC Commemorative found a home in the great Northwest and Shaw cased an HK-91.

The "Light Rifle Pop and Flop" involved knocking down bowling pins at 60 to 90 yards with any non-full auto rifle, AR15, .30 Carbine, etc. Thirty-round magazines were the maximum allowed. Bill Roberts, Jr., from Pennsylvania, smoked it with a 23.9, worth an SC Commemorative; Jeff Chudwin of Illinois was right behind at 29.5, an effort worth a new Colt .45 auto.

The nine-pin event could be renamed the 9mm event. Jay Laymon picked them off in 4.6 seconds, followed by past pin champ Bill Wilson of Arkansas at 4.8 seconds. More guns for the guys — an SC M-29 for Laymon and an HK-91 for Wilson.

Goodall and Aysen captured the two-person women's event — more ¼-carat diamonds, followed by Behlert and Aysen. (In the Second Chance match, shooters can compete on several teams in the same event.)

Californians Alec Jason and Bruce Gray slipped by Don and Ron Koch to take the two-person men's event with a time of 3.5 seconds. Each went back to Granola Land (just kiddin', guys) with an SC Commemorative.

Davis takes good care of the top finishers, but also sprinkles loot through the ranks. David Margolies in 223rd place received a Rock Island Armory XM-15 .223, Kane Zuhone at 303rd was presented with an Enfield .303 and Behlert at 338 was awarded a Winchester Model 70 in .338 Magnum.

The concept of limiting "Master Blasters" to one per team in the many team events is a good one. Setting up weapons classes also gives the average shooters a good chance at winning some loot.

The courses for next year will remain



SOF's Cathy Behlert won Winchester M-70 in .338 Mag with Redfield scope. Photo: Lynn Schoening

Lynn Schoening really bowls 'em over... with M2. Photo: Jake Jatras



Head of Second Chance Armor, Richard Davis, models gift from comely female presenters: custom underwear emblazoned with their names. Photo: Lynn Schoening

Second Chance host, Richard Davis, fondles HK 21A1. Photo: Lynn Schoening



basically the same, but the contest will be opened up to anyone who wants to apply to compete.

Applications may be obtained from: Second Chance, P.O. Box 578, Central Lake, MI 49622. For the money it is the best event in the country. As Davis says: "Take a pin to dinner, then to the range." ☘



# GARTH CHOATE

## Arms Accessories Architect

Text & Photos by Paul Williams

Choate shows revolutionary F.I.E. assault shotgun equipped with his Zytel® pistol-grip stock. Weapons on wall will soon be complemented by Choate accessories.



LOCALS around Bald Knob, Ark., just call him "the big man." Others, more in step with what Garth Choate is about, say he's a wizard with plastics, the man who has revolutionized the riot gun and assault rifle accessories industry. But neither assessment even begins to tell the story.

Ten years ago Choate was an industrial arts teacher in a vo-tech school. But he was also a maverick with a fertile, inventive mind and a strong streak of the entrepreneur. He started a small machine shop that has grown into a manufacturing business with products and projects as far-flung as letter openers (sort of) and laser sighting devices. His expertise is in demand worldwide, and at least one weapon he is currently developing promises to open a new era of military and police shotgun development.

The bread-and-butter products of Choate Machine and Tool Company are its injection-molded Zytel® accessories for rifles, carbines and riot guns. (Zytel® is a plastic created by DuPont expressly for stocks and grips on military arms.) These accessories include the usual pistol grips and pistol-grip stocks for shotguns, stocks and handguards for a wide variety of rifles — including the M1 Carbine and popular Mini-14 — as well as carbine butt-extensions for the UZI and MAC-10.

But Garth Choate has a passion for practical details, and one of his favorite gizmos is the unique 12-gauge shell-follower he produces. Instead of simply being a cap

### BETTER BANNERS

Paul Williams' interest in Garth Choate's weapon collection came from more than the professional writer's nose for news. Shooting's been a lifelong avocation for him. In fact, he says, "I learned to shoot before I could hold the gun myself. My dad used to kneel down and prop it up for me."

As a recreational shooter, Williams' weapon is a Model 12 Winchester pump which he uses to plink clay pigeons and bring down small game.

Now an associate editor for the *Arkansas Times* magazine, Williams is a former Marine (1965-68) who served in Vietnam from 1966 to 1967 as an artillery forward observer. He also did liaison work with the ARVNs (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) and the ROK (Korean) Marines.

But his fondest memory concerning liaison work comes from the week in which he was a member of a forward-observer and fire-direction crew who were airlifted with two 105mms into the Special Forces A camp at Tien Phuc on a C-123.

As he recalls it, "Their bunker was eight inches deep in water and they walked my tail off for a week — but they let us Marines borrow their bunker banner. It read: 'Phuc Communism.'"

— M.L. Jones

over the magazine spring, this safety-orange doo-dad has a tail that slips inside the spring to prevent its over-compression and subsequent tangling — a fatal complication in a hot house-to-house showdown.

Samples of these standard items litter the conference table in Choate's office, along with drawings, prototypes and notes on upcoming projects that overflow from his desk — an expanse of polished wood just a tad smaller than a snooker table — where there is also a weapon or two field-stripped for analysis and a couple of Randall knives from his large collection.

"Come on," Garth says, pushing his chair back from the desk. "Let's go have a look in the vault."

We walk through the combination gymnasium/employee break room behind the office — where Choate pauses to lift a 200-pound barbell onto his weight bench with one hand — and stop in front of a massive steel door, complete with combination tumblers and a spoked wheel in the center for drawing the deadbolts. Inside the 10-foot-by-10-foot reinforced-concrete space is one of nearly every military rifle currently in use anywhere in the world — about half of his collection.

Choate has made, or will make if you ask him, accessories for all of them. Besides such things as the new Zytel® stock for the S&W 3000, one with a conventional profile made to order for the Army, Choate is particularly pleased with his line of M1 Carbine accessories, especially since Iver Johnson will soon be producing the old standby at a new factory in Arkansas. It's some measure of Choate's reputation that he was the first person they contacted about supplying accessories.

*Continued on page 95*



**ABOVE:** Choate uses his weapons collection to help fit prototype accessories. From left: FN FAL, two H&K93s, H&K91, Russian SKS, H&K93, Mini-14, UZI SMG, Mini-14, U.S. M2 Carbine, two FN FALs, Winchester M70, Chicom SKS and U.S. XM-177. **BELOW:** Garth Choate uses modified Remington 870 to point out some of his shotgun modifications.



# LOTS O' RUCK

## It's Not Heavy It's My Bergen

Text & Photos by Leroy Thompson

**A**LTHOUGH there were some pretty fair indigenous rucks used by SOGs or LRRPs in Southeast Asia, the U.S. armed forces have not really developed a rucksack which is as closely associated with special units as the Bergen is with Britain's Special Air Service. In fact, the SAS has been using the Bergen in some form for 30 years and doesn't seem to be contemplating a change.

The current-issue SAS Bergen is constructed of lightweight nylon with tubular frame and tips the scales at only eight pounds. The SAS Bergen's capacity doesn't match the ALICE Medium Field Pack's, but for the SAS, who are trained to survive almost indefinitely with the items carried on just a pistol belt, it's plenty big.

The tubular frame of the Bergen is very light yet can easily carry a fully loaded pack. Unlike the ALICE frame, the Bergen doesn't need a cargo shelf since the frame curves under the pack to form its own shelf. The Bergen frame has two horizontal tubular ribs which help position the pack and a tubular section on each side which wraps partially around the waist. A waist strap, if desired, can be attached to these curving sections or elsewhere. Designed for the forced marches the SAS is famous for, the Bergen frame distributes weights of up to 50 or 60 pounds very well for moving far and fast.

The Bergen pack itself is designed to be as waterproof as possible. There is a large central pouch similar to the one on the ALICE pack. This pouch is closed with a drawstring. Within the pouch flap there is a zippered pocket for flat, soft objects — such as maps — that need more protection from moisture. Rather than having three large outside pockets like the ALICE, the Bergen has one pocket running the width of the

pack. Although its flap is closed with two quick-release buckles (not of the same pattern as U.S. quick-release fasteners, though), the pocket also has a zipper for greater protection from the elements.

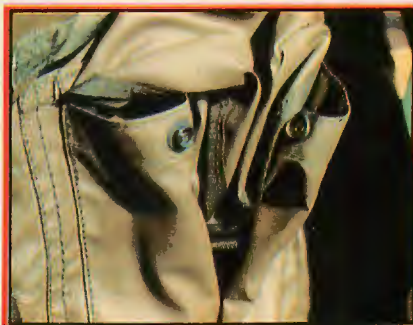
On each side of the Bergen is a long vertical pocket whose flap can be fastened with a single buckle. Each of these pockets is also equipped with snaps along the center so that it can, in effect, be transformed into two long pockets suitable for flares or other long objects. These side pockets are both tunneled so long pieces of equipment can be thrust between them and the pouch.

The system of attaching the shoulder





straps to the Bergen and frame, or just the Bergen if used without the frame, is equally good. On each side of the top and bottom of the ruck and on each side of the top of the frame are located D-rings. When using the Bergen with its frame, the shoulder straps are looped through the lower D-rings on the



**TOP:** Lower pocket has zip closure even though covered by flap. **ABOVE:** One of two long vertical pockets located on sides of Bergen. **LEFT:** Bergen in "light-load" order. Additional items can be strapped onto ruck exterior with straps. **LOWER LEFT:** Close-up of SAS Bergen shows large flap covering central pouch. **BELOW:** SAS Bergen's lightweight tubular frame with shoulder straps (and their method of attachment) and straps wrapped around frame for padding.



## ABOUT LEROY THOMPSON

Leroy Thompson is no stranger to SOF readers. His articles on the SAS ("SAS at War in Malaya," April '81; "SAS Today," December '82) amply demonstrated his expertise in military and *arms* topics, and his particular knowledge of SAS equipment.

Thompson's colorful background includes special and base-security positions in the U.S. Air Force, stints as a deputy sheriff, a bodyguard in Europe and the Caribbean and security chief for a large grocery chain. He has done graduate study in military history at the Universities of Oxford, Edinburgh and London.

pack and around the base of the frame with the end of the strap being fed through the loop and up to a buckle adjustment on the strap. At the top, the D-rings on the frame are fitted through two slots in the pack and on each side a snaphook is attached to both D-rings simultaneously.

The shoulder straps are padded at the points on the shoulders which bear the load. For additional cushioning, two padded straps are wrapped around the frame at the point where it contacts the trooper's back. Two cushions, which are designed to ride between the tubular crossbars of the frame when worn with it, are also built into the rear of the pack for when it is worn without the frame. When worn without the frame the shoulder straps are just attached to the D-rings at the top and bottom of the pack.

Because of the nature of the SAS's missions, the unit needs a pack which is durable, comfortable and compact. The Bergen meets all of these criteria quite well. As did SOGs and LRRPs in Vietnam, the SAS often have to sleep without shedding their packs: They leave nothing behind if it becomes necessary to move out instantly. The Bergen may not match their kip back in Hereford, but it has been slept in many times in some pretty uncomfortable situations.

Unlike many conventional and larger military units, the SAS has its own procurement system which can quickly bring into service new gear deemed necessary. The fact that the Bergen in its various incarnations has been in service so long must, therefore, be a good indication that the SAS is satisfied with it. There have at times been field-expedient alterations, such as reversing the frame for parachuting, but the SAS Bergen has served well.

Any unit needing load-carrying equipment for official or unofficial deep-penetration missions might be well-advised to have a look at the Bergen ruck, especially the one used by the men in the sand-colored berets. There are other versions of the Bergen around — such as the canvas one used by the Commandos — but it's the lightweight nylon SAS Bergen that's the recon/raider's best choice. ✕

# BIATHLON

## SOF Lends Hand to Olympic Hopeful

by W.B. Guthrie

**R**IFLE on your back, you ski into an arena filled with screaming communist East Europeans. You can't listen to the cheers and jeers, because it will blow your concentration.

Auto-hypnotically, you drop your pulse from a sprinting 160 beats per minute to a more manageable 120 as you slip out of the padded packstraps holding your rifle to your back, adjust the peep sights for windage estimated from fluttering flags, aim and fire five times from the standing position on skis at as many 11-centimeter knock-down steel targets. You don't lose points for missing; you ski a 150-meter penalty lap for each missed target. It only adds about 30 seconds to your time... if you ski fast. Then you sprint another five kilometers to the next course of fire. This time you can relax: It's prone. But the target is about one-third the size of the last and the range is the same.

The above scenario is not a nightmare; it is biathlon.

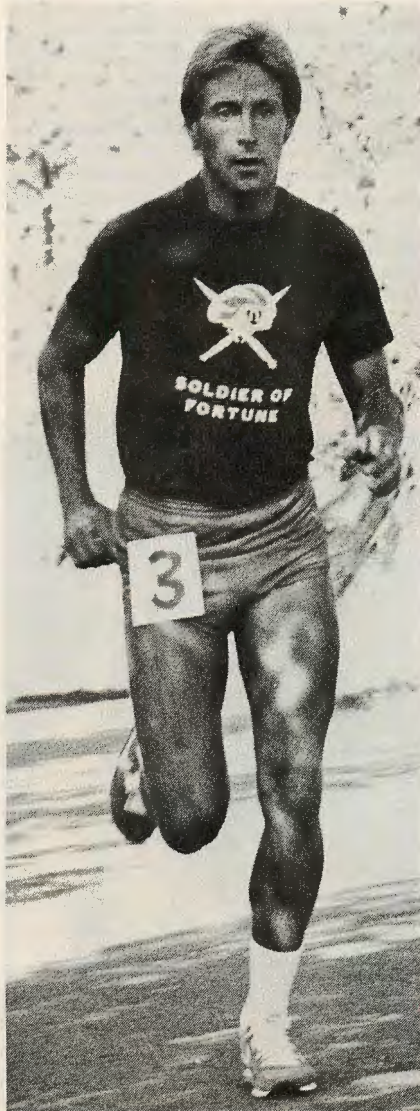
This strenuous combination of cross-country skiing and shooting came from late 19th-century military skiing competitions. Though most courses have been shot with bolt-action rifles, some exclusively military competitions have been run with sub-machine guns. Shooting missile weapons from skis is an old martial art. The skills practiced in biathlon have proved their effectiveness as recently as the 1939 Winter War when the Finns annihilated most of the Soviet 44th Motorized Rifle Division.

Biathlon competitions had been staged for some time before the 1950s, but the first regular meets and yearly world championships began in 1958. Olympic competition began in 1960. The United States has never won a title; the USSR has won about half of the titles available in both team and individual competition.

Since organized biathlon has always been militarily oriented, large-bore rifles were required for shooting courses at ranges from 100 to 250 meters. In 1974 biathlon became a small-bore shooting event since shorter lethal ranges and lower penetration made the event safer and firing from a single range made possible the use of a single shooting station.

Biathlon is especially important to international sport, since it is — along with modern pentathlon — one of two Olympic events that combine conventional athletics with use of firearms. Originally, most of the Greek Olympic events had a military cast;

**SOF-sponsored Nielsen runs in regional road-races to keep competitive edge: Daily training on skis and foot often exceeds 25 miles.**



even most of the foot races were run in armor. Biathlon and modern pentathlon are the only military events left.

The existence of a U.S. biathlon team may be one of our best-kept secrets. This is a result of European domination of the sport, limited exposure in the United States where competitions are rare and its backburner position on the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) agenda. The USOC, which controls all aspects of Olympic sport in America including disbursement of funds, is to say the least not enamored of biathlon.

Traditionally the USOC has placed its funds in those sports in which the United States now competes, or in development of sports in which it can compete in the near future, and provides the rest of the field with just enough to get by. SOF suspects that the USOC has a certain predilection not to fund those sports with such strong military overtones.

The Soviet Union and East Germany see support of Olympic sports from a different point of view. Since just after World War II the communists have recognized the enormous value of Olympic victories so the production of victories is a top priority. Enormous efforts are made in the USSR to provide athletes with facilities, medical assistance, scientifically based research and development in equipment and training techniques, and money. One of the realities the USSR has recognized is that if "Sports Heroes" put in a hard day's work at the tractor factory they'll have neither the energy nor time for the training regimen it takes to compete on the Olympic level. That's why "Soviet Sports Heroes" are often Red Army officers or unassigned engineers.

That's also why the United States does best in mainstream sports that are supported in our school system — track and field and swimming.

American Olympic competitors in the minor sports — skiing, gymnastics, weightlifting, equestrian events — have to go it alone, or with what little support is available from manufacturers or private contributions.

Despite those handicaps, U.S. biathlon





athletes have scrimped, saved and hustled to the point that they are closing the gap on the Europeans. A team medal is unlikely, but the Americans are gaining on the Europeans.

One American in particular has broken from the pack to become an international competitor.

Don Nielsen was a Dartmouth scholarship student, tutor in classics and summertime logger when he was first attracted to biathlon. A lifetime cross-country skier and racer, he gave up that sport at the suggestion of the U.S. biathlon coach.

But to compete in the biathlon he had to turn himself into a serious shooter.

"It's the hardest thing I've ever tried. Biathlon is an incredible combination of conditioning and physical and mental discipline," says Nielsen.

This may sound like hyperbole, but sports physiologists generally agree that biathletes are the world's best-conditioned sportsmen. Mental conditioning is at least as important as the physical, since merely finishing the race isn't winning it. A winner must have a yogi's control of his body as he slows his racing heart and stills shaking muscles to hit tiny targets after a five-kilometer run on skis.

Nielsen does this expertly. His major strength has turned out to be his shooting ability and it's in that portion of the event that he catches up. Many believe Nielsen may be the United States' first serious chance in the history of biathlon at winning a medal against European competition. With any luck, that medal could be won at the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo.

Although he has won virtually every competition in the United States since 1979 — often by wide margins — the financial strain of constant training with little support may deny him and us another chance of winning in Sarajevo.

*Soldier of Fortune Magazine* is helping Nielsen, who moved to Boulder this year in order to train at altitude with another biathlon team member.

Although SOF is not known for involving itself in the support of Olympic-level sports competitions, we do have a long history of supporting marksmanship programs, particularly those with an anti-Soviet bent. And, frankly, if the USOC won't do it, Americans should. We want to help America win. If you wish to help Nielsen and support America's bid for its first Olympic medal in biathlon, call (303) 449-3750 or write Biathlon, *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306 for information. ✕

**Biathletes sprint five kilometers between firing stations, stop to shoot five shots in 25-35 seconds. Photo: Bruce Benedict**

**Biathlon demands fierce concentration: U.S. Olympic Team hopeful Nielsen hones shooting skills. Photo: W.B. Guthrie**

# Fighting Bosboks Slow Up SWAPO

## ANGOLAN AERIAL RECON

Text & Photos  
by Al J. Venter



**T**HERE were 25 decorations awarded for heroism and distinguished service to South African Defense Force personnel who took part in Operation Protea in 1981 (see "To Russia With Love," SOF, January '82). Five of these went to an obscure small-plane unit: 42 Squadron of the SAAF (South African Air Force).

Though the onslaught on SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) lasted only a few weeks, it changed the face of conflict in southern Africa, and probably *composed* the biggest series of battles fought by South Africans since the end of World War II.

SWAPO was routed from its command and control centers throughout much of south Angola, and their East German, Russian and Cuban advisers dislodged from forward positions close to the South West African border. The Angolan Army and FAPLA (Popular Force for the Liberation of Angola) got bloody noses when they tried to intervene on SWAPO's behalf.

After 17 years of terrorist warfare, the South Africans are now in a position to dictate their own peace terms — if there are any to be had.

Until Operation Protea, few people had ever heard of the "Fighting 42." The 42

Squadron's tiny "string and sticky-tape" single-engine "Bosbok" — an Italian hybrid of spotter and reconnaissance aircraft — was flown "by optimists who wear parachutes because they probably will have to use them," according to one Puma pilot who saw them in action.

These seemingly frail aircraft droned endlessly on over scores of battles and contacts that scarred the region as never before, and were the heroes of the day. By the end of the campaign, there were few field commanders who would initiate an action against communist forces without a Bosbok overhead.

The five decorations awarded 42 Squadron during those few weeks included the *Honoris Crux* (for "deeds of bravery while in danger"), awarded to 28-year-old Capt. Danie Laubscher; Lts. Jakes Venter, Andre White and Andy Freeman received Southern Cross medals for risking their lives under fire; a Chief of SADF Commendation went to another squadron officer, Roger Bradfield.

The *Honoris Crux*, the highest award, went to Laubscher — a slight, unassuming young Bosbok pilot who flew as spotter during the crucial Angolan battle of Xangongo. As Laubscher tells it, a South Afri-

can armored column on the way into the SWAPO-occupied riverside town was being hampered by a Soviet 23mm anti-aircraft gun.

"Basically," recalled Capt. Laubscher, "our vehicles had to cross high ground. That particular battery of 23s dominated the high ground and made life difficult for the men in the column; fire was extremely heavy."

An air strike was called in, and it was the captain's job to spot the target for the jets with a smoke rocket. Flying at approximately 2,000 meters above the action, Laubscher twice pointed his nose groundward and fired a smoke rocket to guide the jets on target. Two strikes by jet fighters had no effect on the battery.

"At this stage, I decided that I better get the job done myself," the captain told me. (Although the Bosbok is primarily a spotter, it does carry a pod rocket under each wing.)

Within seconds of nosing down once again, Laubscher came under heavy fire. At an altitude of approximately 1,000 meters, he released his salvo. A cluster of high-explosive rockets homed in on the target at twice the speed of sound. When the dust cleared, the Bosbok was heading skyward, and the troops on the ground gave out a



**ABOVE:** A "clutch" of tiny Boshoks of 42 Squadron flies over Etosha Pan.

**RIGHT:** Angolan Communist Party flag, captured by SADF troops at Ongiva.

**LOWER RIGHT:** Yugoslavian 20mm M-55 Antiaircraft Gun captured by South Africans at Xangongo. Three-barreled gun was used frequently against Boshoks on recon. **LOWER LEFT:** Russian T-34 tank knocked out prior to South African raid on Xangongo.



Although the unit has never lost a Boshok to the enemy, these frail “fighters” have been hit several times, including once by an RPG-7 rocket that left the back-seat spotter with part of the airframe in his lap.

First light en route to target as seen from 42 Squadron Boshok cockpit. LOWER LEFT: Blast trail left by jet bombers during strike on Xangongo. LOWER CENTER: Capt. Danie Laubscher, *Honoris Crux* recipient, sits at controls of his Boshok. Laubscher distinguished himself by putting Soviet antiaircraft gun out of action in battle of Xangongo. BELOW: Lt. Jakes Venter won Southern Cross medal when he pinpointed and helped disable Russian armored column.



cheer. Laubscher had his medal and a Bosbok full of holes.

The main role of 42 Squadron as explained by its OC (Officer in Command), Maj. Raymond Doyle, is to use the Bosbok "as a light battlefield recon aircraft." It is also utilized as a forward air control element in conventional operations and as a terrorist spotter during counterinsurgency operations. Several times, well-trained Bosbok pilots have effectively tracked insurgent spoor from the air and guided strike forces onto target. One 42 Squadron pilot even killed two terrors with smoke rockets because he had nothing else to fire at them.

Although the unit has never lost a Bosbok to the enemy, these frail "fighters" have been hit several times, including once by an RPG-7 rocket that left the back-seat spotter with part of the air-frame in his lap.

Another time — also during Operation

Protea — Maj. Doyle's aircraft was fired at with RPG-7s. He had to move some distance upwind to continue his spotting role, where he was able to see the target. It was a "holy" Bosbok that brought Doyle back to Ondangwa base in Ovamboland.

Just about every pilot who has flown with the squadron has a few war tales to tell — some of them pretty hairy.

Lt. Jakes Venter, a 23-year-old veteran (he flew Impala jets before he transferred to 42 Squadron), achieved his decoration during the battle of Ongiva. Lt. Venter succeeded in killing several SWAPO and FAPLA terrors, as well as disabling a member of the Soviet detachment, who was captured and is still held in South Africa.

He spotted an enemy column of about 10 vehicles moving out of Ongiva shortly before sunset on the first day of the battle for the town, their path leading in the direction

of a 32 Infantry Battalion stopper group which had taken up position on one of the roads heading north. And, as the Russians had armor (there were T-34 tanks and a few BRDM armed reconnaissance vehicles), his quickly transmitted instructions gave the South Africans time to find cover in the sparse terrain before they were discovered by the Russians and their escort. It was a lucky break; a couple of dozen ground troops would certainly have been no match for mobile Soviet armor.

Without waiting for instructions, Lt. Venter called in an air strike in a bid to flush out some of the escaping vehicles that, by now, were heading through the bush. It was here that Venter encountered problems.

With no ammunition to spot the target, Lt. Venter had to rely solely on verbal forward-air-control commands, an extremely difficult proposition in a featureless, flat terrain with the late-afternoon light quickly fading. Some of the escaping vehicles were knocked out and a proportion of those in them — including the Russians — were killed. For several minutes toward the end, Venter recalled, it was touch and go, because it was dark by the time the last salvo was fired.

The majority of the men who come to this squadron have already done their basics on other planes. Maj. Doyle, for instance, flew Super Frelon transport choppers for several years. By the time pilots reach the squadron, they have been thoroughly familiarized in all aspects of recon flying. Some of the younger pilots, 19- or 20-year-olds, new to the squadron, go operational immediately.

And, although the unit has established a good track record, it has only been operational since March 1979.

It was then the first squadron of Bosboks went to the border. Within a month of arriving at Ondangwa base, all but one Bosbok had been hit by ground fire. But the men learned quickly — and they had an incredible little machine to work with.

The Bosbok has a stalling speed at sea level of 33 knots. It has been known to put down on a strip 40 meters long and take off in 160. Incredible, but totally feasible, according to this cocky little band of aviators.

Their range is good. The record time aloft for one man in the operational area adjacent to Angola is nine hours, 10 minutes — all at night. The best time over an active, hostile target area is more than six hours, which feels like days when one is being shot at.

Though the enemy has never knocked one of these planes out of the sky, a few Bosboks have been lost in accidents recently, together with two men, during the biggest operation in South Africa in the winter of 1982. This incident occurred when South African forces pushed the furthest north they had struck at SWAPO bases for several years.

In that operation, and in battles to come, ground forces and jet fighters will rely on the brave pilots flying the little Bosboks of Fighting 42 Squadron. ✖



Bosbok pilot pumps gas: 42 Squadron has to sort out own supply and fuel problems in southern Angolan bush.

## BIG LITTLE BOSBOK by John Metzger

Forty Two Squadron's combat record speaks for itself. Fighting ground troops depend on the Squadron's determined pilots to get the job done. And the pilots, in turn, rely on the scrappy little Bosbok to keep them airborne.

The seemingly frail bird is designated "Bosbok" by South Africa, although it is made in Italy by Aeritalia and designated the AM.3C. It is designed to meet Italian Air Force capability requirements of forward air control, observation, liaison, cargo and personnel transport (three or four seats), casualty evacuation and tactical support of ground troops. In 1973, the SADF received its first order of 40 Bosboks, now in service with the South African Air Force's 41 and 42 Squadrons, stationed at Johannesburg and Potchefstroom respectively.

The standard Bosbok has two underwing pylons, each capable of carrying up to 375 pounds of external ordnance. Bosbok armament includes a Matron pod containing two 7.62mm machine

guns with 2,000 rounds of ammunition, a General Electric Minigun pod and 1,500 rounds of ammo, a Matra 125 pack of six 2.75-inch rockets, a Matra 122 pack of seven BPD 50mm rockets, a 113-kilogram GP bomb, an AN/M1A2 cluster of six nine-kilogram fragmentation bombs, an AN/M4A1 cluster of three 10-kilogram parachute-retarded fragmentation bombs, an M28A2 cluster of 24 two-kilogram "butterfly" bombs, an AS.11 or AS.12 wire-guided missile, an M84A1 target marker and various mounts for aerial photographic equipment. That's a lot to work with, and of course the Bosbok doesn't fly with total capacity armament. Most rounds that they fire are target markers.

The little spotter, flown "by optimists who wear parachutes because they will probably have to use them," according to a chopper pilot who has seen them in action, will no doubt see more action in future contacts. And field commanders leading ground troops will rest easier knowing that Bosboks are flying overhead.

# U.S. Trains Troops for Nicaraguan Threat

# HEATING UP HONDURAS

by Jay Mallin

**T**HE hills are steep. The valleys between are covered with banana trees and thick foliage. A dusty, unpaved road winds among the hills, often with sharp declivities to one side. The area is sparsely populated. Occasional adobe, tin-topped huts or clusters of huts constitute "villages."

This is the border area in south-central Honduras. Across the border is Sandinista-controlled Nicaragua. As the chopper flies this zone is only about 120 miles from the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa; by road the trip takes well over three hours.

This isolated region has assumed major strategic importance in the growing struggle for Central America. Many Nicaraguan counterinsurgents (Contras) were trained at hidden bases in these Honduran hills, before slipping across the border to fight the Sandinistas. Some 3,000 to 4,000 Contras are now fighting inside Nicaragua in the northwestern portion of the country. In addition, an estimated 5,000 members of the anti-Sandinista Miskito, Sumo, Rama and lesser Indian tribes are fighting in the northeastern portion of Nicaragua. They control the countryside; the Sandinistas do not venture out of towns at night and during the day they travel only in heavily armed groups.

The war is not going well for the Sandinistas. They have sent some of their best units into combat but have not succeeded in overcoming the guerrillas.

A single road winds along the border on the Honduran side, leading to the Honduran town of Cifuentes. People in the area say they have heard bombardments inside Nicaragua; one Honduran reported that her own land was subjected to a Sandinista aerial attack. The road has been continually harassed by the Sandinista Army, and the Honduran Army has had to close it. Cifuentes has been virtually abandoned by its residents.

**U.S. Special Forces trainers teach Central American troops at new camp near Puerto Castilla, Honduras. Here Honduran Army soldier learns to sight M16. Photo: Jay Mallin**



Sandinista attacks have not been limited to weapons fire. A mortar shell severely damaged a house in Cifuentes and another landed nearby. The Nicaraguans have come across the border and placed mines.

One Honduran soldier, two American newspapermen and five other people have been killed. A number of people have been injured.

Perhaps the Nicaraguans suspect that the border has been used by the Contras for resupply purposes. Perhaps they are attempting to

frighten the Hondurans. Whatever the reasons, the situation along the border threatens to escalate into an undeclared war. Nicaragua has some 11,000 troops along the border. Facing them are approximately 3,000 Hondurans.

Communist Cuba has been pouring light and heavy weapons into Nicaragua in order to build that country's military capacity. In 1982 weapons shipped to Nicaragua by Cuba and the Soviet Union were worth about \$160 million — a large amount for a small country. Already Nicaragua is the most powerful nation militarily in Central America. And Cuba is not only sending supplies, it is also sending

men. Some 2,000 Cuban military personnel entered Nicaragua at midyear, bringing the total number of Cubans in Nicaragua to about 8,000, half of whom are military.

In the face of the Nicaraguan menace, the United States has moved to support Honduras and build up its forces. But, in sharp contrast with the assistance Nicaragua receives from its allies, the United States in 1982 made grants totalling only \$5 million and sold supplies amounting to \$26 million.

And U.S. supplies and grants have not always been equitable. As one U.S. officer points out: "The Hondurans had to pay \$40 for \$20 combat boots."

The Honduran Army has serious deficiencies. It has 81 to 160mm mortars but no artillery. There is no uniformity in weaponry; Honduran soldiers carry everything from FALs to Galils to M16s. There is a serious lack of communications equipment; some troops on the border have no radios. U.S. trainers sometimes have to provide maps. Kotexes serve as bandages. The Hondurans do not have cammo sticks and mud doesn't stay on, so they rely on field-expedients such as burnt wood.



Gen. Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, chief of the Honduran armed forces, is considered "tough and aggressive" by U.S. military who work with him. He is pressing for increased aid, including economic assistance, and he traveled to Washington to ask for it. He is shaping up his troops; he has moved good officers into command positions.

Honduras has an army of 12,000 men, an air force of 1,500 men (including a ground security force) and a navy of 800 men. There are 4,500 police, who are under the army's command. (Nicaragua has a regular army of 25,000 men, and reserves and militia totalling 80,000 men. Many of the latter are little more than machete wielders.)

Honduras is the second largest (after Nicaragua) of the Central Amer-

ican republics. Some four million people, mainly mestizo, live on 112,150 square kilometers of land. The rich earth produces bananas, coffee, corn, beans and a variety of other crops.

Honduras has had its full share of military rulers. Now, however, the country has its first popularly elected president since 1972. Roberto Suazo Cordoba, a doctor and member of one of the country's two traditional parties, the *Partido Liberal*, was chosen in free elections and took office in January 1982 for a six-year term.

The United States is concentrating on training the Honduran armed forces. To accomplish this there is now a larger American military establishment in Honduras than there is in civil-war-torn El Salvador, where the United States maintains a self-

imposed limit of 55 U.S. trainers. (The U.S. Defense Department emphasizes that the Americans in Honduras and El Salvador are *trainers*, not advisers. They train the local troops but do not advise them in the field, as was done in Vietnam.)

In an inconspicuous house overlooking Tegucigalpa's Toncontin International Airport is headquartered the MILGP, popularly known as the Mil-Group. This unit is in charge of all U.S. military training activities in Honduras. The group consists of:

- the commander;
- one U.S. Army representative;
- one Air Force representative;
- one Navy representative;
- one logistical training officer;
- one sergeant who handles support for the group.

## PERSONAL LOSS

by Bob Poos

Dial Torgerson, 1928-1983.  
Richard Cross, 1950-1983.

Those will be part of the inscriptions carved on their gravestones. I wish that their families would add one more word each respectively: Reporter. Photographer.

For that is what they were and both excelled in their work. Their skill and, indeed, their courage is proven by what they did for a living and where they did it. Foreign correspondents, particularly those who specialize in covering wars, are the elite of their profession.

I had known Dial off and on for some 25 years. I met Cross only once, briefly during a recent trip to Honduras.

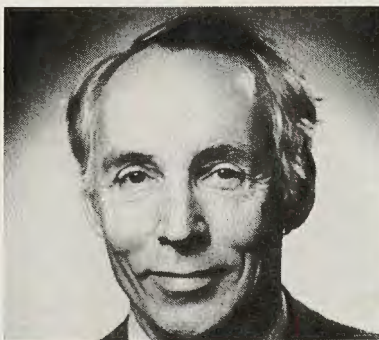
Torgerson joined the AP in Los Angeles a couple of years before I did the same in St. Louis. AP people inevitably bump into one another as do our colleagues in the UPI. Virtually all of us are close friends, particularly those who cover the world's conflicts. Both Dial and I were determined to achieve Foreign Service status and we did, he first in the Middle East, I in Southeast Asia. And our paths ultimately took both of us to Latin America.

Some people accuse war correspondents of being war lovers as well. They are not. They are intelligent, sometimes even sensitive, people and thus are appalled by the waste of war, both in blood and money.

But it is what they do. Why? It doesn't pay particularly well. In most cases less than a sandhog working in caissons under heavy air pressure or high iron workers. When I went to Saigon, I did not get paid a nickel more than I did in St. Louis.

Peter Arnett, the great AP Vietnam

reporter — he won a Pulitzer Prize at it — and I once held a long discussion about this. We agreed that one of the key elements which attracted us was witnessing the ultimate response of human beings caught up in conflict. One sees all the extremes of the best and the worst in them. I have — we all have — seen these in people. Soldiers breaking and running from a battlefield, others trying to conceal themselves in civilian clothing. Actual refusal to go into the cauldron of combat.



Dial Torgerson Photo: UPI

It was not an uncommon sight in Vietnam to witness a young black man crawl out on a bullet-lashed battlefield to drag back a wounded white redneck Georgia cracker — or vice versa. I have seen men give a comrade their last drink of water when that substance was worth far more than gold or diamonds.

The life of a foreign correspondent is not a particularly pleasant one. It's much less excitement and danger than it is boredom, long hours in lonely hotel rooms and lobbies. In Vietnam, battlefield correspondents shared the same C Rats as those infantry soldiers and Marines they covered. Bad water. Lots of that. I have had Montezuma's Revenge in more countries than I can recollect.

I've also had malaria, black water fever and amoebic dysentery. And I've twice been wounded doing this for a living.

Most of my professional friends have suffered one or all of the above but still they keep on doing it.

Very few ever say or even concede this, but I think another reason for our devotion to our profession is a deeply-held conviction that the public should be informed about these things, the reasons for and behind them as well as developments as they occur.

A commonly shared belief by people otherwise occupied is that foreign and war correspondents are a colorful lot, decked out in expensive uniforms, wearing pith helmets and carrying binoculars. That is an absurdity. Most of us dress in the most serviceable clothing we can find: tough enough to resist underbrush, light enough to be cool and with plenty of large pockets for extra film, notebooks and ballpoint pens.

There are almost as many women now as men in the field — a trend which started in Vietnam and which, as a traditionalist, first distressed me. Now I admire their courage and professional ability. I guess Dickey Chappelle first convinced me of this. For Dickey was one of the best of them all. I witnessed her death by a mine in Vietnam while on an operation with the Seventh Marines and I still feel a keen sense of personal loss.

For the record, Dial was Mexico City Bureau Chief for the *Los Angeles Times* when he died and Cross was a freelance photographer, under contract with the *Times* and *U.S. News and World Report*.

They were killed apparently by a land mine while driving a section of rutted gravel road in Honduras. It is



This is the basic unit — six persons in all. There are, however, almost always additional personnel on temporary duty doing specialized tasks. At the time SOF visited the MilGroup and in the period just before, there were logistics and personnel management officers, a two-man English-language-training team and a two-man basic helicopter-training team.

One member of the MilGroup is a veteran of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. He joined the U.S. Army and rose through the ranks. He and other Bay of Pigs veterans have played unsung but key roles in U.S. counter-insurgency programs over the years.

The Hondurans and the United States had previously perceived the greatest danger to Honduras as coming from Castro-line terrorists. The



**Honduran trooper shows classmates camouflage techniques for border-patrol ops during training session held by U.S. Special Forces instructors. Photo: Marcial Sevilla.**

about 10 miles long and parallels the Nicaraguan border.

This road, actually little more than a trail, is used primarily by two groups: logging truck drivers and news people who employ it to observe the nearby Nicaraguan troops and tanks and in hopes of locating Contras, the Nicaraguan rebels armed, trained and financed by the CIA who seek to overthrow the Marxist Sandinista regime.

I have travelled the same road and so have most of my colleagues in the Central American press corps. It's just what one *does* over there. Also there is the possibility of witnessing an exchange of gunfire between Honduran and Nicaraguan soldiers — a not infrequent occurrence. A soldier from both sides was killed in such an exchange shortly after Torgerson and Cross perished.

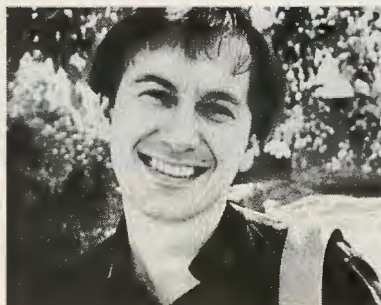
There is little doubt that Nicaraguan troops mined the road. Honduran Army engineers later uncovered a diamond pattern of old U.S. anti-tank mines, inherited by the Sandinistas from the rule of dictator Anastasio Somoza, whom they overthrew.

Then, said witnesses, including a log-truck driver, the Sandinista troops blasted the little white Toyota Corolla in which the two were riding with machine-gun fire. There was no need for that. The newsmen died instantly, their car reduced to a shapeless mass of burned-out metal — two pieces actually, since the front end was hurled some 200 feet away.

When the tragedy occurred, it was discussed quietly in hotel dining rooms and bars in places like San Salvador, Tegucigalpa and Guatemala City. Both men were popular: Cross being a quiet (for a photographer almost shy), young man; while his older colleague was warm,

charming and known for his quick wit and ready humor. Both were highly respected for their professional ability.

Then, of course, politicians seized upon the deaths as an opportunity to advance their own opinions. Honduran Foreign Minister Edgardo Paz Burnica called it a "cold-blooded assassination" — he may have a point — while U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz dispatched a strong protest to Managua, protesting "a deliberate attack on unarmed civilians."



**Richard Cross Photo: UPI**

Predictably, Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto denied all, snarling, "We know the United States is looking for a pretext to take direct action against Nicaragua," a suggestion that the deed was a setup by North American and Honduran interests.

I don't think it was either. Dial and Dick were engaged in a hazardous profession and both well knew the risk they were taking when they went out on an afternoon drive on that road from Trojes to Cienfuentes. And sometimes risk-takers lose.

Why were they driving in a little car at all? Well, that's the way one has to cover Honduras and El Salvador. It's not like Southeast Asia where transportation was free and easy via the American military or the CIA's Air

training given to the Hondurans centered basically on counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency. Americans gave instruction in COIN tactics, rifle marksmanship, parachuting and air mobility (choppers).

Says a U.S. official: "The Honduran Army was under-equipped and ill-trained. It was a gentleman's army."

In the "Soccer War" with El Salvador in 1969 the Honduran Army was pushed back (although the Honduran Air Force quickly won complete control of the skies — a unique conflict in which one side won the land war, the other the air war).

With the arming of Nicaragua by the communist countries, the primary threat to Honduras changed.

Says the U.S. officer: "The Nicaraguan threat was their tanks,

America. Riding to battles in helicopters was in of itself a dangerous business but, believe me, it beat hell out of driving on Central American "roads" in rental cars — which is the only way one can get around. An airplane or chopper ride over there is a seldom-achieved luxury.

We drove all over northern and northeastern El Salvador during a recent trip there, to places where the guerrillas had been until a few hours or days or weeks earlier. Once three of us entered a village where just hours before a guerrilla-Civil Defense force fire fight of 10-hours duration had occurred, resulting in the deaths of 15 men loyal to the government. Villagers said the insurgents were undoubtedly watching from the surrounding jungle.

Another time someone suggested a drive "to Santa Clara to see if the government troops are in there like they say they are." Fortunately they were.

And while driving yet another road, someone inquired, "This road hasn't been mined lately, has it?"

That indicates neither bravery nor foolhardiness. As a colleague commented, "People who don't like to do this can always go into public relations."

Well, so ended the careers of Dial Torgerson and Dick Cross. They were at least doing *something* they wanted to do and at which they excelled. That means something in this world.

There will be more. So far 12 newsmen have perished while covering Central American conflicts. That will continue to happen so long as these wars last and they don't give any indication of fading away.

Hopefully, it won't be as many as the 55 either killed or still listed missing in Southeast Asia. ☒



their moderate air mobility, their wheeled, armored personnel carriers backed by medium- to long-range artillery, including rocketry. Honduras needed a small, well-armed, well-trained mobile force that could react to the Nicaraguan threat on the ground. The problem was, in effect, how to train the equivalent of a light infantry division."

The decision was made not to follow the usual procedure of having the United States train a series of Honduran units. In that system, eventually troops would leave the units, and untrained manpower would replace them, thus gradually diluting the effects of the U.S. efforts.

It was decided that instead the United States would train men to teach others within a team, a concept the Hondurans particularly liked. The Americans train a Honduran unit, the Honduran unit then trains another Honduran unit. The Americans provide support but phase out as the process continues. The American mobile training team can then begin with another Honduran unit, and so on. (The MTT consists of between 12 and 15 men.)

In a typical cycle an MTT takes a 150-man Honduran company. Basic infantry training is reviewed, and special instruction given to officers and sergeants.

Then the Americans work with 10-man Honduran squads, and afterward with 30- to 40-man platoons. The Hondurans are instructed in ambushing, day and night patrolling, and general offensive and defensive tactics.

Finally, the company as a whole receives training, including chopper-borne air mobility.

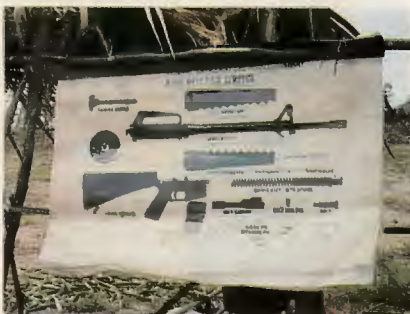
MilGroup assistance for the air force centers on training helicopter pilots. In addition, an effort is being made at what is called "professionalization." Honduran flyers had been jacks-of-all-trades who had to fly various kinds of aircraft. The Americans would prefer that they specialize and become experts with particular aircraft.

**Honduran trooper prepares to fire 84mm Carl Gustav M2-550 after U.S. Special Forces instructor's demonstration. Photo: Marcial Sevilla**

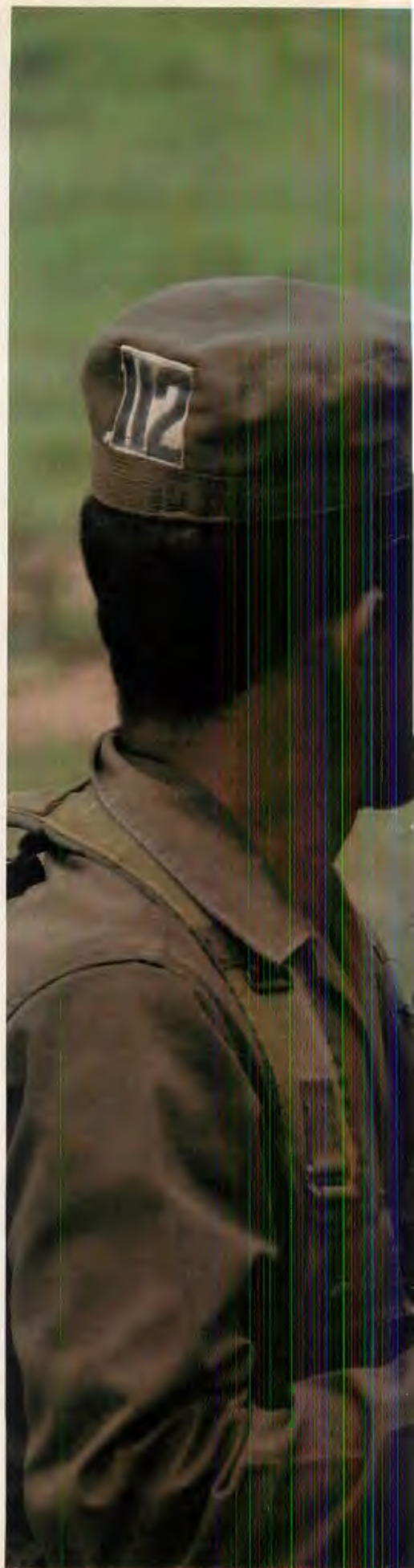


**Capt. Thomas G. Foster IV, U.S. SF commander, holds class for 11th Battalion officers. Hondurans in turn train other units. Photo: Marcial Sevilla**

American SF trainers use visual aids in lectures to troops. Here M16 diagrams illustrate weapon's anatomy so Hondurans can learn field-stripping and cleaning. Photo: Jay Mallin



**As combat becomes more frequent training intensifies, especially with heavy weapons like this 81mm mortar. Photo: Marcial Sevilla**





Training for the small Honduran Navy centers on small-boat handling, navigation, maintenance and electronic engineering. (A primary task of the Honduran Navy today is to try to halt the flow of arms from Nicaragua through the Gulf of Fonseca to Salvadoran guerrillas. All three countries border on the gulf. For its surveillance the Hondurans use six 25-foot whalers and three 65-foot patrol craft.)

Members of a 140-man Honduran Army unit lie prone on canvas or palm fronds. Special Forces trainers lean close, giving guidance. One trainer cautions: "Don't yank the trigger. Caress it as if you were playing with yourself." They are receiving training in firing the M16s with which they have recently been equipped.

The earth is dusty and a bulldozer kicks up more red dust as it levels ground. The nearby hills are streaked with brown; the area suffers from a drought. Ironically, a few miles to the north there is plenty of water: the Caribbean Sea.

On the coast is the town of Puerto Castilla. Here on 14 June 1983, 125 American troops came ashore from the U.S. Navy LST *Lamoure County*. The troops were the 1st Battalion of the 7th Special Forces, plus a few specialists such as communicators. The arrival of the Americans marked a major step-up in the U.S. program to train Salvadoran, Honduran and possibly other Central American troops.

Space had been cleared amidst the thick foliage and more was being cleared when SOF visited the remote area. A well had been dug to provide water, but water continues to be a major problem, especially when men go on long patrols in the searing heat of day. Eighty 16-man olive-green tents had been put up and some 45 more were planned. (They were not yet being used; U.S. personnel were living in trailers in Puerto Castilla.)

Wooden buildings which will house a headquarters, a warehouse and a medical dispensary are being rapidly constructed.

The base is called the Regional Military Training Center. Technically it is a Honduran Army base, commanded by Honduran Lt. Col. Filander Ucles Armijo. In actuality this is a Special Forces outpost. Commanding the SF are Lt. Col. John Mirus of Pasco, Wash., and Maj. Art Zieske of Baton Rouge, La.

The establishment of this regional center is of major importance. In war-torn El Salvador the United States has limited U.S. trainers to 55 at any one time. Now, with the training center in operation, the United States can significantly expand its instructional program.

Because of the ill-will stemming from the war between El Salvador and Honduras, there had been resistance in Honduras to letting Salvadoran troops into the country.

One Honduran political party stated: "Honduras should be neither the stepping stone for extra-regional forces nor a sanctuary for regional forces who intend to use our territory to serve their own interests."

Nevertheless, the Honduran congress voted to permit the Salvadorans to come in for training.

The first Salvadoran unit to receive instruction is the Arce Battalion, a light infantry group. The first Salvadorans — 57 men including two officers and 10 non-coms — arrived 29 July, flown into the nearby city of Trujillo. Says a U.S. officer: "This is the first time a Salvadoran battalion will be trained by Americans in Central America as a unit, not piece by piece. Our squad leaders will work with their squad leaders, our platoon leaders with their platoon leaders, our company leaders with their company leaders." Included within the program will be instruction on human rights, particularly the treatment of POWs and of detained civilians.

The first unit trained by the SF was a 140-man Honduran security force which will guard the base. Training was on patrolling, communications, site security and the checking of persons and vehicles.

Typical of the Honduran soldiers is Luis Felicito Zapata, who is 16 years old. He found the training to be "very good." Felicito is paid 50 lempiras a month (about \$25). He was drafted while coming out of a movie house in Trujillo. Commented an observer wryly: "*Rocky III* has been the best recruiting instrument the Honduran Army has."

The 11th Battalion of the Honduran Army is strategically placed at Salamar, a locality near the town of San Lorenzo in the southernmost reach of the country. The 11th is but a few miles from the Gulf of Fonseca, whose waters lap on the shores of Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Nicaraguan territory is within sight of the battalion. The gulf has been one of the routes used by Nicaragua to send weapons to El Salvador, and the Nicaraguans also clandestinely ship arms overland because a mere 60 miles or so of Honduran territory separate the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran borders.

One of the responsibilities of the 11th is to intercept these arms shipments, and weapons have indeed been found. Some discoveries have been publicly announced; others have not. The battalion prefers to keep its operations secret. American trainers report that occasionally a unit with



**ABOVE:** American Special Forces trainer prepares Honduran Army squad for field exercise near Nicaraguan border. Troopers carry M16 rifles. Photo: Marcial Sevilla

**BELOW:** Camouflage-draped Honduran trooper asks U.S. trainer if course is correct during small-unit field exercise. Photo: Marcial Sevilla



which they have been working will break training and head off somewhere; later it returns and training is resumed.

The 11th Battalion has one of the U.S. Special Forces MTTs that are in the country (the other is in the northern part of Honduras). Capt. Thomas G. Foster IV, an Army brat born in San Francisco, headed a reinforced (15 men) A-team which arrived 22 April 1983 from Panama. Foster and his men set about giving a 150-man Honduran company an intensive six-week basic infantry course. The Honduran soldiers call it *contra-insurgencia*, but it is more than that.

Says Foster: "We are heavy on live firing. We are heavy on patrolling.

Basically we are teaching them how to shoot, move and communicate." A portion of the training is specifically directed at the Honduran officers. Instruction is given in map reading, how to give orders and what tactics are.

The purpose of the program run by the Americans is not merely to train particular Honduran units but to launch a process whereby the Hondurans will train themselves. Honduran counterparts initially worked with the Americans and then became a Honduran MTT, commanded by Lt. Jose Amilcar Flores. It consists of two officers and 13 NCOs.

Upon completion of training the first company, Flores' team took over the training cycle. Most of the Americans



**ABOVE:** U.S. trainer explains patrol movement to M16-toting 11th Battalion soldier during in-field exercise. Photo: Marcial Sevilla

**BELOW:** Honduran troop takes American camouflage lessons seriously as he guards perimeter, M16 at the ready, during field exercise. Photo: Marcial Sevilla



departed, leaving five to support the Honduran MTT. Previously there was one American for each Honduran squad. Now there is one American for each platoon. Eventually the U.S. and Honduran teams hope to train the entire 11th Battalion.

Security is topnotch at the base. Honduran troops stand on the road in front of the battalion's quarters — no sitting under palm trees here. Manned outposts are scattered throughout the bush and hills that surround the base.

For the Americans security is a particular problem because of the possibility of terrorist attacks upon them. The Americans work out of a "team room" — cluttered with everything from maps and canteens to weapons — but they don't live on base. They sleep in *different* places, never staying at any one of them for long. Here one night, there another, some nights out on patrol with the Hondurans.

Face photos of the Americans (except Foster) are not permitted.

The day SOF visited the battalion:

An American sergeant was working his way through the shrubbery with a Honduran squad. He wasn't leading the Hondurans; rather he was providing advice to the squad leader. The trainer comments: "Unlike American soldiers they carry their ammunition with them. They don't have to keep running to the ammo bunker."

Elsewhere in a flat area American trainers were teaching Hondurans how to use 81mm Argentine mortars. These had just arrived and are considered of good quality. Each is equipped with its own harness.

Capt. Foster, using a chalk board, was lecturing to a group of Honduran officers.

On a firing range away from the main-base area, three American trainers were showing Hondurans how to aim and fire Swedish Carl Gustaf 84mm antitank weapons. The Hondurans cautioned each other, "Open your mouth, open your mouth," as the explosions resounded through the hills.

The flames of war are licking at the Honduran frontier. The United States is helping the Hondurans prepare for possible conflict against a militarily stronger neighbor.

A race against time is under way: The Hondurans must soon be ready to meet whatever dangers may arise. If the United States can help them become substantially more powerful, this could well become a key deterrent in preventing all-out war from developing.

In the meantime, growing tensions — and firing on the border — seem just about inevitable. ☐



# BOB DENARD

**France's Master  
Merc Goes Hollywood**

**by Robert Roman**

Photo: Gamma/Liaison





**Mercenary Col. Bob Denard inspects wounded Congolese soldiers with Maj. Gen. Louis Bobozo, Congolese Army commander, at Kisangani, The Congo, in 1967. Photo: UPI**

**I**T was 0330, 13 May 1978. Time for disembarkation. Fifty French mercenaries and a dog slipped down the side of the battered trawler and clambered into motorized rubber rafts. They shoved off, heading for the starlit Itsandra Beach on Moroni in the Comoro Islands. The three rafts touched sand at precisely 0400. The mercenaries jumped into the surf, moved onto the beach and formed up into three assault groups. Swiftly and silently they moved on their target: an old mansion looming up just beyond the beach, the residence of the president of the Comoros.

In the best Hollywood tradition (French

mercs are ardent film fans), the assault teams stormed the residence, guns blazing. The mercs blasted the eight-man presidential guard, killing five, burst into the house and raced upstairs to the master bedroom.

They broke through the door. The president was in bed with two naked Creole women. He stared calmly at Bob Denard.

"I've been expecting you," he said.

Denard nodded. "I know," he replied. "The prophecy. You've been expecting the man with the dog." He patted the big German shepherd poised beside him.

Sure it sounds like bad melodrama — but that's Bob Denard. He goes through life as if a script writer were at his side dictating dialogue. Only a Denard would select as motto for his men *Le monde notre patrie*, (The world is our country), an unabashed plagiarism of the French Foreign Legion's *Legio Patria Nostrum*. But it works — at

least for Denard.

It's that sort of thing that makes Bob Denard the world's most famous mercenary.

Denard is constantly on stage, even when death is as real and imminent as the bullets aimed at him. His world must always see him through a magnifying glass flamboyantly. Yet, his lifestyle is clandestine — a paradox which only adds to public interest. In person he radiates a glittering charisma, an effect he has cultivated over the years.

Yet, real-life melodrama does seem to more than meet him halfway. And Denard then supplies the other half of the scenario. Take the Comoro Islands caper and the thing with the dog.

*Continued on page 88*



# MARINES IN THE MIDDLE

**A**FTER nightfall they began shooting in the hills. Several Marines and I climbed to the roof of a low building behind Marine HQ, a small compound near Beirut Airport, and sat with our legs over the edge to watch the show. A Marine sergeant later described the Mideastern fighting as "a buncha dummies killing each other." He understood the region. Watching them is the only entertainment there is. The Marines can't go downtown because it would invite assassination. The night was murky. From the dark mess of the hills came the bright flicker of Druse 155s, a sudden illumination that died instantly, and seconds later the fiery orange impact on invisible Falange positions. Or maybe on nothing at all: The guys in the hills are lousy shots.





# U.S. Guards Lebanese Peace Nobody Else Wants

Text & Photos by Rick Venable

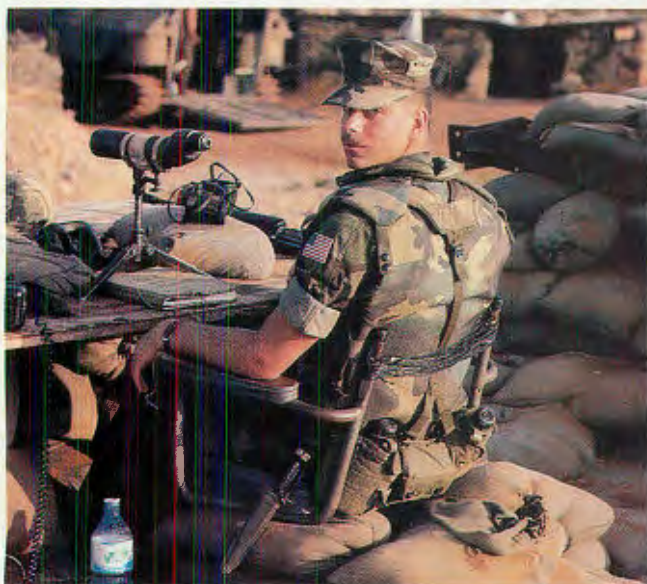
Some time later came the pop of the tube and heavy crump of the round. "Tap them suckers," said a Marine next to me. This isn't the Marines' war, yet. It may be before long. The gyrenes have had some nasty confrontations with the Israelis, and the Syrians have been hinting that American blood may flow if the United States doesn't do whatever the Syrians want. The Mideast is always explosive. Now it is more so than usual. Bright red streaks erupted from the hillside and raced across the sky in flat arcs. Fifties. Toward the end of their flight they slowed and drifted lazily and burned out. Then came the thump-thump-thump of the gun.

"Wonder what the hell they think they're shooting at," a staff sergeant beside me said

Photo: D.P.T.

# LEBANON

**RIGHT: Marines spend a lot of time on jeep patrols in downtown Beirut, more for visibility than actual reconnaissance, but in a place filled with so many armed militias, the patrols are not without danger. BELOW: U.S. Marine mans rifle range spotting scope at Marine Headquarters near Beirut airport.**



to nobody in particular. I heard somebody take a swig from a beer. Low-hanging clouds flashed with the muzzle blast of a battery hidden behind the hills.

"Mostly they shoot at each other's villages," offered someone. "Those turkeys can't hit anything smaller."

"They just can't get organized," someone said, this being an expression of great contempt from a Marine. Jarheads are not noted for respecting much of anybody, but they are unusually unimpressed, even for them, by Mideasterners.

The locals just aren't organized.

They aren't exactly in the space-age, either. A couple of reporters of my acquaintance had nearly been killed by the Syrians in the Bekaa Valley. The Syrians thought they were vectoring in Israeli fighters with their light meters.

Jeep patrols take up a lot of the Marines' time.

The purpose isn't to find the bad guys and blow them away, but to show the flag and let everybody know that the troops are here. Really, it's a diplomatic mission. Unfortunately, diplomacy in these parts can take the form of flinging a grenade into a jeepful of Marines, killing an ambassador or blowing up the American Embassy. There aren't any good guys in the Mideast.





**BELOW: Marines stay in close contact while on patrols; although they have not had any trouble on patrols yet, the Marines are very careful — they remember the U.S. Embassy.**



Loyalties change fast here. Any group indigenous to the Middle East might for reasons clear or hidden want to kill Americans. The trick to this job is staying very careful, day after day, even though nothing happens. Eventually something will, and the careless will go home in body bags. The Marines are careful.

In early afternoon I put on a flak jacket and pot and joined several jeeps at HQ for patrol. It was hot, bright, the kind of light that puts heavy shadows under helmet rims and screws up photography. The men looked healthy and confident as they got into battle gear and listened to the lieutenant's briefing. He spread out a map on the hood of his jeep to show me our route. The path changes every time out for obvious reasons.

"OK, mount up; let's do it," a sergeant hollered and we climbed into the open vehicles. I thought of other jeeps and other roads farther east. The Corps doesn't change: same tough young studs, same lean officers, just different roads.

The jeep cranked into life with a noise like a coffee grinder full of C-ration cans. (I've never heard a jeep that didn't sound like it had more than 20 feet to go before it died.) We headed out single file. At the gate magazines

# LEBANON



**Marine Amphibious Unit rotating in on Beirut's Black Beach in LVT P-7s.**

clicked into 16s and the man next to me arranged the LAW on the floor so he could get to it if he had to.

We turned right and down the road toward Beirut, past the unfinished mosque rising on the right like a concrete mushroom. Beyond the city the hills rose, brown and dry, spotted with villages. The jeep whined and the wind blew cool and we passed a line of trucks carrying French paras.

**Downtown.** I was in the back seat with a young Marine in glasses who didn't say much. The jeeps were spread out to make it hard for an ambush to take out more than one of them. The drivers try to keep Lebanese vehicles from getting in between. Traffic swirled around us: bikes, scooters, cars, pedestrians, all racing in different directions in the chaos that passes for traffic in the Third World. It's scary: Any one of them could pull out a 9mm and take out a couple of guys. The lieutenant in front held a radio handset constantly to his mouth. He turned to talk to me when he could.

"We haven't had any trouble on patrol since we've been here, but you can't depend on it. Look at the Embassy. *He's on your six, coming up. . .*"

This last was into the radio, not to me. A motorcycle had come up fast from behind and was weaving recklessly in and out among the jeeps. Probably he was just a local hotrod. "Probably" is a dangerous word in the Middle East. Terrorists on motorcycles have been known to come alongside a jeep and drop things in. This one wasn't going to.

"What do you do if he goes for a weapon? Blow him away?" I asked.

"You better believe it."

This is as good a place as any to say that the Marines in Beirut look good, real good. For over a year the PR types in D.C. had been telling me that the Corps is getting good material these days, that deadheads and guys who screw up aren't allowed to reup. Somewhat to my surprise, this turns out to be true.

These guys were fit, efficient, confident, and knew what they were doing. In fact they acted like combat vets, which the young ones weren't. They're smart: Average IQ is way up. If we have ever had a better Marine Corps, I haven't seen it — and I don't say that just because I can't think of anything else to write.

**Martyr's Square.** This is a downtown square that was blown to hell during the civil war. The destruction was incredible. The lieutenant called a five-minute pit stop. We parked by mounds of deserted rubble and put out security. They kept an eye on upstairs windows. The city is full of weird sects and splinter groups, including the KGB, any of whom could decide that liquidating a few Marines might help whatever the hell their particular sacred cause was. Khomeini's men, for example, are here. You watch the windows.

While everybody took a leak, I walked around the square looking into blasted bunkers built into the lower stories. The sandbags were splitting with age. I wondered how much good they did the guys inside. An hour later we were driving uphill on a narrow street between high buildings. Cars suddenly appeared and jammed the way, forcing us to stop. That wasn't a good sign. Security hopped quickly off the jeeps and spread out. Men remaining in the jeeps began scanning the roofs and balconies overhead. They were real serious about it. Nothing happened. Just a traffic jam — this time.



**LEFT: Marines run careful patrols in downtown Beirut: route changes daily, convoy is spread out to prevent multiple targets, civilian vehicles aren't allowed between jeeps. BELOW: Marines relax in barracks during off-time.**



**Around midnight.** I was asleep in my cot under jury-rigged mosquito netting. Every time I moved, it collapsed and wrapped around me and the mosquitos moved in for the kill. Suddenly, there came a loud ka-boom with a sharp edge to it that meant somebody wasn't friendly. The boys in the hills were dropping something a damned sight closer than they usually did. Somebody hollered, "We're taking incoming!", which in fact we weren't yet, and I rolled off the cot most skosh. My first thought was, "There goes that goddam net again." Sure enough, I was wrapped up in it like a fly in a web. What worried me was that those rounds, whatever they had been, might have been registration shots for a further salvo right on top of us. Nobody had shelled the Marines before, a point which meant exactly nothing, and even a Mid-Easterner could hit something as big as Headquarters. Well, maybe he could. As I waited for more rounds, it suddenly struck me that cowardice had virtues I had overlooked. I headed for the shelters out back. It was barely worth doing. The Marines have never really understood bunkers. All they had was a hole with a few sandbags around it. Some things never change.

**Headquarters.** The gunny was feeding the goat its bottle. Yeah, goat: Mark One, small. To keep the grass down, the Marines had bought a small, dying black he-goat. A military vet had reworked it extensively. It revived, began eating like three goats and gained weight. The gyrenes named it General Bill E. Goat and gave it the run of the compound. To avoid the objection that he didn't do anything, they assigned him to security — a sign in the compound read: Beware of Guard Goat.

General Billy hadn't really learned how to butt yet, but he would lean up against your leg with his little bitty horns and sort of push. If the Marines ever find a sapper dead in the wire with a pair of bruises on his lower leg, well, they'll know Billy got him. Billy ate three bottles of milk a day, some tomatoes and lettuce, and all the C-ration parts nobody wanted. Sometimes he ate newspapers while people were reading them.

## **MARINE MASCOT MURDERED** by Donna DuVall

Gen. Bill E. Goat, the young kid adopted by the U.S. Marines' 22nd Amphibious Unit in Lebanon who rose rapidly to a generalship in less than a year, returned to the United States to less than a hero's welcome. Billy, who was obtained to keep the grass mowed, became a local celebrity as the Marines' mascot in Beirut. Having completed his tour in Lebanon, the he-goat was to have returned to stateside duty as the mascot for the traditional Army-Navy football game. However, the Department of Agriculture had different plans for the Lebanese veteran. Upon his arrival in New York, federal veterinarians from the DOA had him put to death because they feared he carried hoof-and-mouth disease. Robert Gale, supervisory veterinary medical officer for the Kennedy Airport import office, defended the feds' action: "It was an illegal entry. We're just trying to protect the livestock industry in the United States." Pan Am Airlines had given General Billy, as his Leathernecks fondly called him, free passage from Beirut. Another Marine hero has gone the way of Chesty Puller and John Wayne.



# LEBANON

**Black Beach.** One Marine Amphibious Unit was moving out and another MAU was rotating in. The gyrenes think they are here for the long haul, and they probably are right. The day was clear and warm. On the horizon, ships of the fleet moved in and out. On the beach, troops set up markers. CH-46s fwop-fwopped overhead.

In the distance, the landing craft must have hit the water because I could see white smears moving toward the beach: LVT P-7s, the successor to the old P-5 Amtrac of 'Nam. They grew larger, mostly submerged until the bottom shallowed out and they heaved up and churned through the surf in clouds of spray. The crews unbuttoned and stuck their heads out of the hatches in goggles — same cocky tractor-rats I used to know. The big green-and-tan brutes roared over the sand.

Then came the infantry and the tanks, hour after hour. Everything seemed to go smoothly. The landing boats dropped their ramps when they got close in, and the armor howled and whistled in the surf and rocked up onto shore. Line after line of trucks and troops poured off the dock. In Washington, the armchair soldiers like to say that the amphibious



**ABOVE:** U.S. CH-46 lands on helicopter pad aboard U.S. Navy ship off Lebanon's coast.

**Photo:** D.P.T. **LOWER LEFT:** The name of Marine HQ, "The Can't Shoot Back Saloon," changed

to the "The Did Shoot Back Saloon" after an incident prompted one Marine to return fire. **RIGHT:** Infantry amphibious unit rotating into Beirut. Military experts in Washington may think Marines' amphibious role is obsolete, but author found it an impressive sight.



mission of the Corps is obsolete. Everything is obsolete until you need it. These guys can bring a lot of stuff ashore fast, a talent I'd hate to lose.

Interestingly, the Marines are not terribly impressed by the Israelis. The reasons are not surprising if you look at the question from a military instead of a PR point of view. The Israeli Defense Forces — IDF — have never had to fight a decent army. The various Arab armies are numerically strong, but consist of illiterate Third-World soldiers, generally other than splendidly trained, who have trouble understanding anything with moving parts. A man who can't read a manual won't maintain his truck very well.

In particular, running an air war requires large numbers of technically sharp people. Israelis are at Western standards in this. Arabs aren't. It is no accident that the IDF relies heavily on air power.

Further, the Israelis are not — despite the impression given by the press — the underdog some think they are. They usually outnumber their opponents in the air, and their equipment is far superior: American F-15s, F-16s (probably the best clear-air dogfighters ever made), E-2Cs, ECM gear and so on. By contrast the Arabs fly MiG-23s and below.

For my money, the Israelis genuinely excel in organization and leadership, which tend to be American weak points. When they plan an operation, they do it according to military realities. The men who do it are practical, gifted soldiers. This, more than anything else, accounts for their successes. Americans would overplan the same operation by involving too many people, most of them not really competent to do it, and then let Jimmy Carter direct it from the White House.

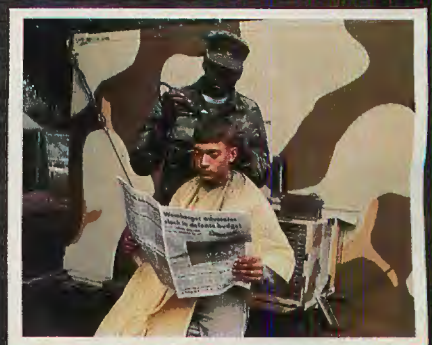
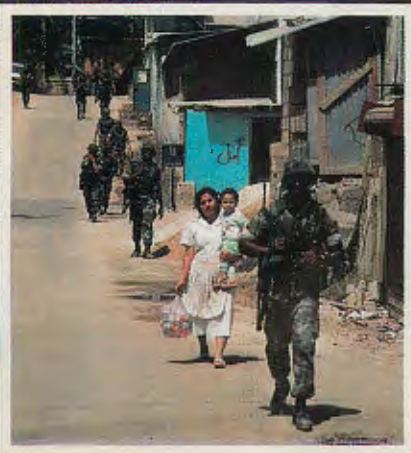
But most Israeli troops are reserves and, even though well-organized, are not up to the standards of professionals like the Marines. Their fire discipline is less than spectacular. In fact, they hit a mine one day and nearly killed some Marines by firing in all directions with a cal. .50, putting some rounds through gyrene HQ.

A point of particular note is that IDF is at its best in lightning attacks. In Beirut it appears to be getting bogged down in a war of mines and sniping and ambushes. They are not good at it. Even if they were occupying, conquered territory takes numbers, and the Israelis haven't got them. As one jarhead said, "Welcome to Vietnam, suckers."

**BELOW: Navy SEAL aboard ship after training dive off coast of Beirut. Photo: D.P.T. LOWER CENTER: Marines in peacekeeping force don't have much hope that lasting peace will come soon to**



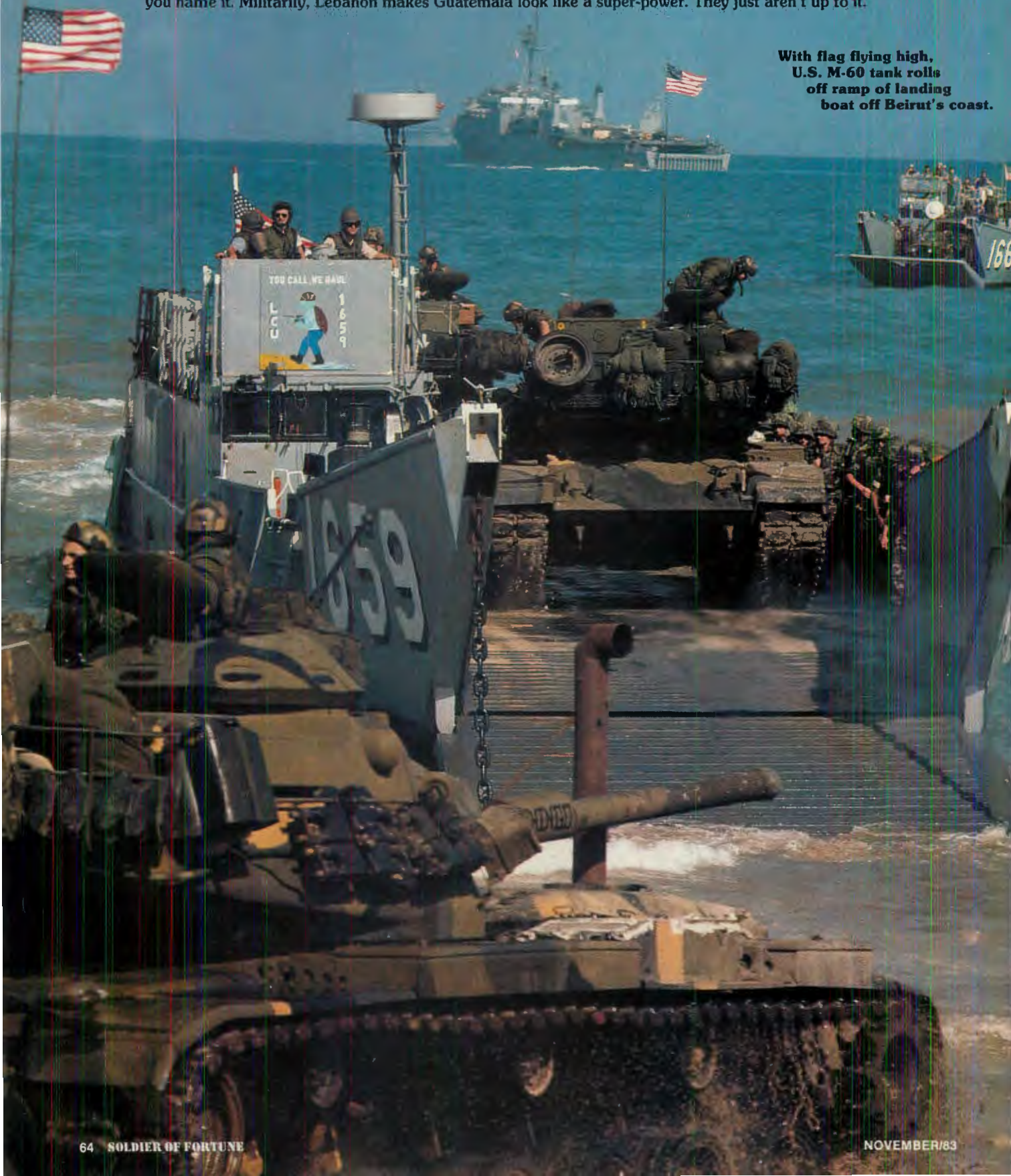
**war-ravaged Lebanon, but whatever comes, Marines should be up to the task. LOWER RIGHT: Looking the part of a Marine is important on a "diplomatic" assignment, as the one in Beirut is. Photo: D.P.T.**



# LEBANON

The idea of the peace-keeping force, of which the Marines are part, is to give the Lebanese Army time to build up so that it can control the various warring factions by itself. Almost nobody has much hope that it will ever be able to do it. There are too many private armies and religious militias and invaders for a new small force to handle: the Falange, Druse, Haddad's people in South Lebanon, the PLO, Iranians, Syrians, Israelis — you name it. Militarily, Lebanon makes Guatemala look like a super-power. They just aren't up to it.

**With flag flying high,  
U.S. M-60 tank rolls  
off ramp of landing  
boat off Beirut's coast.**





They try, though. Early in the morning at Marine HQ, platoons of Lebs came pounding by in formation. Just when they got to the Marine tents, they shouted in cadence, "We are the-ee Leb-a-nese! Mighty, mighty Lebanese!" Everybody chuckled. "Bleeping hamsters," one sergeant said, shaking his head and smiling. The Marines like the Lebs fine. They just aren't impressed with their military prowess.

Another problem, and I suspect a serious one, is that the Leb Army has factions within itself. One soldier, talking to an American, pointed to himself and said, "Me, Falange." Loyalties to the various factions may be stronger than loyalties to the national army. I wish them luck. They'll need it. Many people here suspect that Israel and Syria would like to annex parts of the country.

My last night with the Marines. I got a beer and walked along the long perimeter road that curved away from headquarters. The sun was setting and the gunny was feeding the goat. They were firing in the hills again. Several noncoms were out running, sweating in the heat. I don't pretend to know what's going to happen here, but these guys can handle it. ☒

## ON THE MEDIA TRAIL IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

by Fred Reed

Bouncing across southern Lebanon is a convoy of 125 reporters, photographers and TV crazies in 25 rented Subarus, the assembled war correspondents of the Western world. Somehow I don't think this is how Ernie Pyle did it. We look like a traffic jam in Tokyo. Photographers dangle acrobatically from windows. Three TV cameras protrude like poorly thought-out plumbing from the car ahead, intently filming a wrecked jeep. A Brazilian TV crew has crawled onto the roof of its car. Arabs stare, deeply puzzled. They have seen any number of armies roaring about, but nothing so quintessentially mad as this.

For six days I have been living in hotels on Israeli borders with this horde. It is like living in a cageful of histrionic tarantulas. Nowhere but in a war zone have I seen such bellicose, courageous, rude, egotistical, preposterously masculine, faintly reptilian rogues, all working hard at being Marlboro Men. A fellow with a codpiece concession could coin money. Heaven knows what the Arabs would think of that.

We pull into Nabatieh, a village. The Israeli escorts eye the anarchic bullheaded mob like snappish sheepdogs. They know that everybody here wants to escape and get his Subaru blown out from under him at the front. A war correspondent feels slighted by fate if he is not almost blown up every day or two. To a large degree they believe they are the actors in this scene; the armies are props. They look forward to sitting in dark foreign bars in the manner of Hemingway at his most excessive and saying, "Yes, bit of a tiff in '82, got my bloody Subaru shot out from under me, ought to bullet-proof the things... happens, you know."

Some Palestinian prisoners are on display for us in a courtyard, so that we can see how benevolently the Israelis treat their captives. The journalists alight in a pack and race toward the alarmed prisoners. The TV guys jog along in pairs, one carrying the camera and the other a suitcase full of batteries or whatever. Waving their microphones like the tendrils of some underwater beast, balancing cameras on high to see over those in front, they shout incomprehensible questions at the bewildered Palestinians.

The numerical superiority of the press and its lamentable assertiveness combine, as usual, to dominate the scene. One hundred twenty-five irritated reporters — "Hey, hey, outa the way, buddy, I got pictures to take. Hey you..." — engulf and then digest a dozen Christian militiamen on a pair of armored personnel carriers. Nabatieh is now a Press Event. The public will never see this absurd performance. However, every photographer will carefully frame out the other newsmen, giving the saleable impression that he alone was out there in no-man's land.

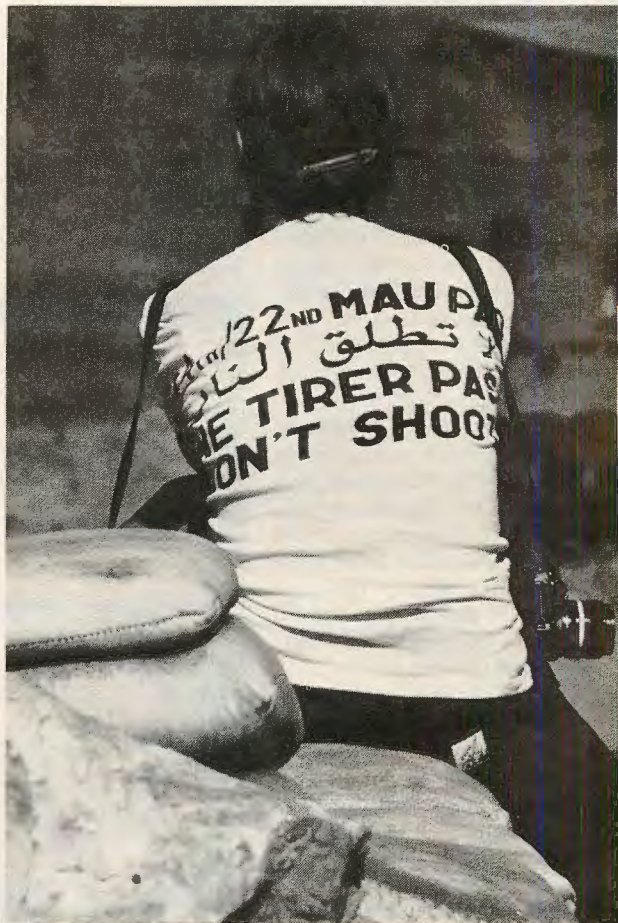
Bored, I stand with some other reporters next to an Israeli jeep. A framed picture of Yasser Arafat is tied to the bumper. I grin, knowing a GI gag when I see one, but a camera crew begins jogging toward us with its suitcase. The TV types have detected a Visual in ol' Arafat. The Israeli frantically snatches the picture away: If that goes on the satellite to 500 million viewers, right above the license plate of his jeep, he will have a central position with a firing squad.

The reporters are grousing about the TV clowns and how they don't know what news is and how they're always in the way. This is true. Of the major ethnic groups of the news racket, TV types are truly pestilential — comparatively. They carry more electronics than the space shuttle, all wired together with cables. They need absolute quiet for their microphones, nobody else in the picture, a lot of time to set up and a long time to shoot. Reporters usually think TV people should be chained in their hotels during a war, and also between wars. This is wisdom.

Finally the Subaru Bureau remounts and heads home. For any other class of people, driving out of a small town would be done in comity and safety. But no. Everybody jumps in his car as if beginning a Grand Prix, backs fiercely into the crowd and spins the tires viciously trying to be first in the convoy. The idea is to be first to the telephones on reaching the hotel. For this they are perfectly willing to run down seven or eight colleagues and a few slow Arabs, and bash into an armored personnel carrier.

Again we bump across southern Lebanon, cameras protruding, Arabs puzzling: a Japanese used car lot on the move. ☒

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**F**IDEL Castro, soon after becoming Cuba's newest dictator in the early hours of the first day of 1959, dispatched fledgling spies abroad to provide intelligence support for the export of his revolution. Some of his agents were teenagers who had fought with Castro during his two years in the Sierra Maestre mountains. The raw intelligence operatives were ridiculed from Mexico City to Tokyo when they pretended to be diplomats. Castro's spies could be spotted easily at embassy receptions with their long hair, unkempt beards, ill-fitting black suits and, invariably, hip bulges which scarcely concealed Colt .45-caliber automatic pistols, favored weapon of the General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI).

The DGI was Cuban in its early period, but was nursed through growing pains by the Committee of State Security, the Soviet secret service known as the KGB. From the beginning the Russians molded the DGI into its own image. KGB instructors taught Cubans the tradecraft of clandestine operations before they were posted overseas. Soon the appearance of DGI agents changed — their hair was trimmed, cut of clothing improved and ostentatious handguns were replaced with more discreet sidearms.

While Castro welcomed Soviet tutelage for the DGI, he resisted KGB schemes to control his intelligence service. His trusted DGI chief, Manuel Pineiro, had studied at Columbia University in New York, was married to an American and suspected Russian motives. Pineiro kept an eye on the KGB colonel who worked in an adjacent office. Other Soviet officers occupied advisory positions in the DGI and Pineiro watched them, too, reporting to his "maximum chief," Fidel Castro.

The tricks of the espionage trade taught by KGB officers to DGI agents were tested in the field when Castro attempted to export his revolution, often violently, to most of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Kremlin did not approve; the Politburo considered the adventures foolhardy and, worse, they didn't conform to the party line. The Soviets discouraged Castro's revolutionary antics, suggesting he subvert his enemies quietly, Russian-style.

When Fidel Castro spurned Soviet political guidance the DGI became a chip in a game of power poker between the KGB on one side and Castro and Pineiro on the other.

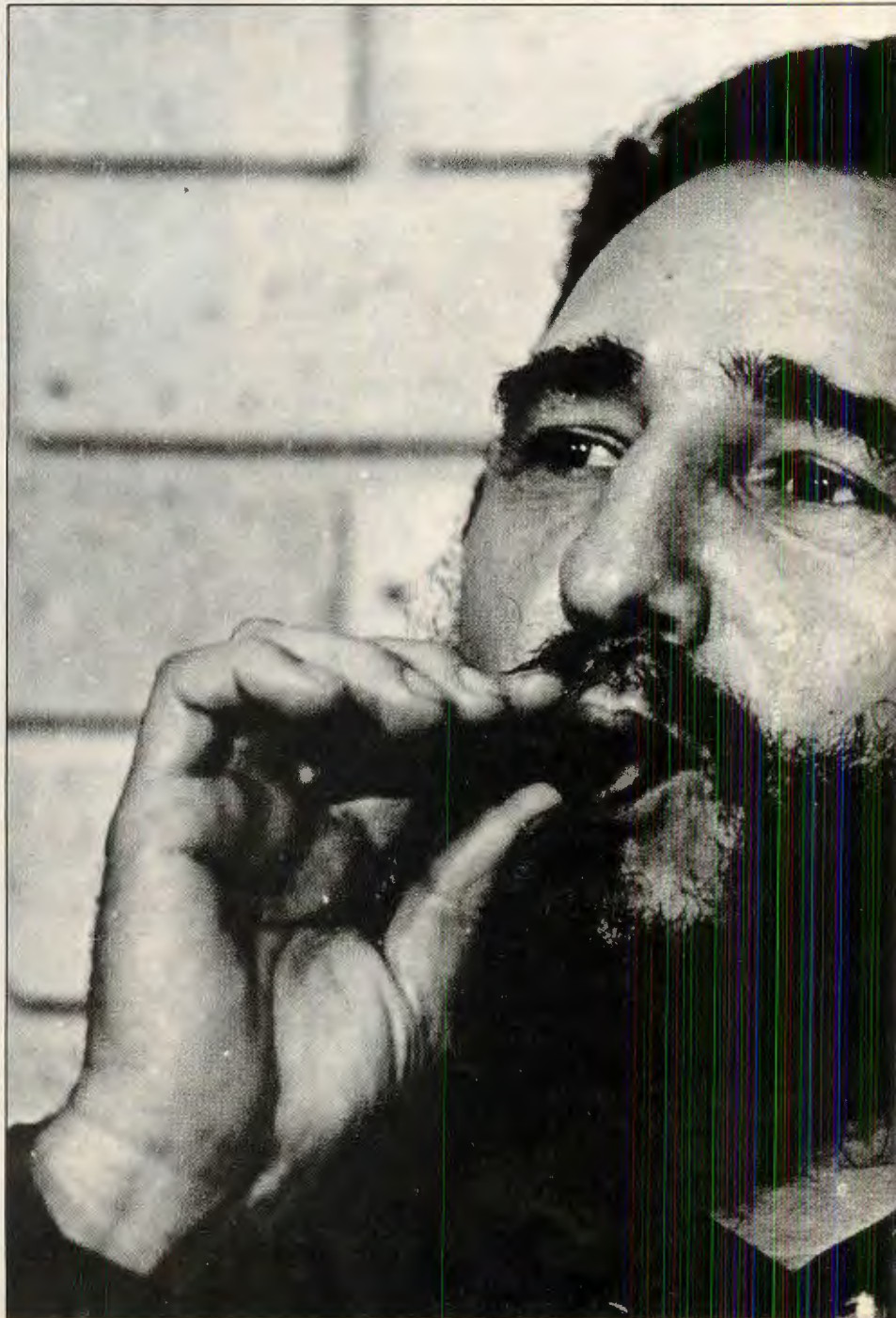
By late 1961 Soviet bids to win control of the DGI became increasingly blatant. Some Cuban agents sent to Moscow for training were recruited by the KGB; others refused Russian blandishments, and reported the pitch to Pineiro. Fidel Castro tolerated the intrigue for over a year before he called the Soviet bluff. In a March 1962 television harangue — three hours on camera, shorter than most of his speeches — Castro castigated the Soviets for maneuvering to steal his revolution and suborn his secret service.

The contest for power in Cuba continued for six years. Then, in early 1968, Castro again challenged the Russians by jailing 34 pro-Moscow Cuban officials.

# CASTRO

## Sons of the K

by David



# 'S SPIES

## GB Grow Up

Atlee Phillips



Then the Russians played the oil card.

Petroleum shipments from the Black Sea to Cuban ports dwindled to a trickle and, in some cases, dried up completely. "The oil refineries are shut down for repairs," was the official Russian explanation. The Cuban economy sagged disastrously. Castro wanted desperately to call the Soviet hand. Once he ordered a census of Cuban oxen in the vain hope that the sugar harvest could be reaped without Russian fuel. The economy neared collapse.

Castro threw in his hand in the aftermath of the Prague Spring of 1968, when the Czech uprising was crushed by Soviet tanks. Except in Chile, leaders of every Communist Party in Latin America abandoned the party line to denounce the Soviets. Cubans expected Castro to join the chorus of condemnation in a television speech. Then the Russian ambassador met with Castro privately. Perhaps the subject of discussion was oil. Whatever was said, Fidel Castro's speech, brief and blunt, stunned Cubans — he praised the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia!

The Soviets had won the winner-take-all game. Cuba became a Russian stooge in international affairs, after Castro agreed not to criticize Soviet policy and to accept 5,000 Soviet specialists to run the Cuban economy. In the intelligence arena, the DGI became a KGB surrogate. Manuel Pineiro was demoted; the new DGI chief reported directly to the KGB; and Cuban spies around the world received new orders from headquarters. In Paris, the DGI chief summoned his staff and announced, "We are closer to the Soviets now." Asked to explain, he read aloud from the message from Havana: "We are working for our associates, and will be taking on some of their jobs."

One job the Cubans undertook for the KGB in 1971 in England was a rescue mission. The British government, exasperated by proliferating Soviet espionage activity, expelled 107 Russian diplomats. Without case officers to steer them, KGB networks foundered. But, a DGI defector in London later revealed, Cuban agents stepped in to handhold Soviet spies and keep espionage operations afloat until the KGB was able to replenish its staff with fresh diplomats.

The Soviets, through the DGI and, to a lesser extent, their military intelligence service, the Chief Directorate of the Soviet General Staff (GRU), used Cuban agents to their advantage during the 1970s. Castro's spies were especially useful in Africa and the Middle East. With the DGI pursuing Soviet ends, KGB advisers no longer discouraged violence in Cuban adventurism. KGB personnel and financing helped transform the island of Cuba into a vast academy for guerrillas and terrorists from more than 50 countries.

A lesson in Soviet endorsement of violence, and Cuban promotion of it, is found in the principal textbook provided to students in secret schools in Cuba, a book published *after* the Russians came in charge. "Terrorism," instructs the *Mini*

*Manual of the Urban Guerrilla*, "is an action that the urban guerrilla must execute with the greatest cold-bloodedness, calmness and decision."

Students learn that assassination requires only a single guerrilla: "In many cases," the manual reads, "the execution can be carried out by one sniper...operating in absolute secrecy and in cold blood."

One Cuban training camp graduate became a celebrated assassin and notorious terrorist. Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, a Venezuelan usually known as "Carlos," headed the squad which kidnapped 12 OPEC oil ministers in Vienna in 1975. Three persons were killed, with Carlos himself pumping five bullets into one victim. The same year, in Paris, Carlos perpetrated several bloodbaths, including one in which "with the greatest cold-bloodedness" he dropped an M-26 grenade from a nightclub balcony into the crowd below, wounding 30 people, two of them mortally. An informant led three French detectives to an apartment where Carlos was hiding. Although the police had the advantage of surprise, Carlos escaped after shooting and killing the informant and two of the policemen, and wounding the third.

The shootout prompted the French Interior Ministry to issue a statement "confirming the close link between terrorist networks and the espionage services of certain states." The ambiguity was deference to one state, the Soviet Union, which the French did not want to antagonize. But the French did not hesitate to name Cuba, and they expelled three DGI agents for conspiring to arrange Carlos' escape.

The Cuban connection with Soviet intelligence programs is not confined to DGI covert political gambits or GRU military field operations. As the DGI has matured, its agents have become adept in the basic espionage task of gathering information. Cubans make good spies; they are usually clever, often personable. The Spanish-speaking operatives communicate effectively in Latin America, black Cubans blend into African situations and blond DGI agents are not conspicuous in Europe.

But nowhere does the KGB get better operational mileage from the DGI than in this country.

The U.S. is described in KGB training lectures as "the main enemy." There are about 1,000 Soviet intelligence people in the United States, 400 of them undercover at the United Nations Mission in New York. This army of spies makes the principal charge against American institutions, but skirmishes are launched from the flanks. In Mexico City, for instance, the large complement of KGB personnel in the Soviet Embassy is not there to pilfer Mexican secrets (there aren't many), but to use Mexico as a base of operation against American targets. Similarly, DGI headquarters in Havana is a KGB command post for sorties into the United States.

Official cover for the DGI in the United States is limited, due to the absence of di-

## CIA CHIEF

David Atlee Phillips was chief of the CIA's Latin American and Caribbean operations until his retirement in 1975. During his CIA career he served twice on the island of Cuba. He is the founder of The Association of Former Intelligence Officers. Besides authoring three books, he writes and lectures frequently on intelligence matters. This article first appeared in *The Retired Officer* and is reprinted with permission from its 13 January 1982 issue.

plomatic relations between the two countries. But 20 Cuban agents work out of the Cuban Interest Section in the Czech Embassy in Washington, and 80 in the United Nations Mission in New York.

When diplomatic billets are scarce secret services rely on "illegals," or deep-cover agents. The KGB has spent large sums and years of preparation in order to insinuate a single deep-cover spy into U.S. society, usually after a stopover in an English-

speaking country to polish language. The time and money is considered well spent, as spies need a cover, or legend, to explain their presence in the United States.

The DGI has no such problem — it dispatches agents into the United States quickly and cheaply.

"The only thing the KGB has to do," explains Alfonso Tarabochio, a former Senate counter-intelligence investigator, "is throw the Cuban agents among the Cuban community to pretend they escaped by boat or they jumped the fence in Guantanamo." Once DGI spies mingle with Cuban exiles in a U.S. city, they have only to spout a few anti-Castro slogans to be accepted. "So they don't have to build legends like a Soviet or East German would have to do, or come to the U.S. either from Australia or South Africa, like some of the Soviets have. They can come here directly, by boat."

Once in the United States, the KGB-DGI spies operate without much difficulty. The FBI is charged with thwarting Cuban espionage, but one Bureau agent admits, "We might as well give the Cubans a

Cuban-training-camp graduate Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, Venezuelan who became an infamous assassin and master terrorist under the name "Carlos," or sometimes simply "the Jackal." Photo: Wide World



Contingent of young American students journeyed to Cuba via Canada to work in Cuba's sugar cane fields in 1970. Some believe that the "Venceremos Brigades" were used as training grounds for underground radical groups that could attack U.S. from within when they returned home. Photo: Wide World



license to spy. We have our hands full watching Russians; there's simply not enough manpower or money to monitor Cuban activities adequately."

Yet the FBI has foiled DGI operations which prove that Cuban intelligence poses a serious security threat. Some Cuban operations have been ominous. For example, a DGI officer was expelled after he attempted to purloin the floor plans of then-President Nixon's Florida residence. Others have followed the James Bond tradition, as when the Cubans dangled a beautiful South African blonde, "Jennifer," as sexual bait for big fish in Washington, hooking at least one senior Department of State officer.

Psychological warfare experts consider the DGI-sponsored *Venceremos* (We Will Win) Brigades one of the most successful covert political operations in modern history. Some 2,500 Americans, in 10 contingents, visited Cuba between 1969 and 1977. The ostensible purpose was to cut Cuban sugar cane. In fact, the Americans were encouraged to destroy their own society. U.S. Weathermen — members of the underground radical group which boasted of bombing the U.S. Capitol — met Vietnamese and Viet Cong delegations in Havana. Within weeks of their return they fanned the flames of the Chicago riots.

A more recent DGI propaganda coup was the successful campaign to create doubt about the authenticity of a Department of State White Paper on El Salvador — a media event orchestrated from his European exile by renegade CIA agent Philip Agee. Agee has played the role of a Cuban agent of influence for almost a decade. He pounded pro-Cuban drums before elections in Jamaica, was the star attraction at a Communist Youth Festival in Havana and today continues his identification of American intelligence agents abroad.

In addition to DGI support, the Soviet Union can now expect military field assistance from GRU-trained Cuban intelligence officers among the thousands of troops in Africa and the Middle East. Closer to home, Cuban officers worked with the Nicaraguan government to accomplish its goal of a 50,000-man army in 1982.

"Our priorities have had to change," comments a long-time Defense Intelligence Agency officer.

A half-dozen CIA and FBI veterans were recently asked to respond in one word to the question, "How good is the DGI now?"

"Good."

"Better."

"Professional."

"Improved."

"Aggressive."

And, disregarding the one-word-answer injunction, "Damn good."

Castro's secret service has come of age, and his spies are no longer teenagers. If licenses are to be issued, they should be to the FBI at home and the CIA abroad — in the form of authority and funds to confront the Soviet Union on yet another front. ☒

**M**ACHINE pistols: ill-defined, misunderstood, misused, and most often poorly conceived, a very minor limb on the tree of military small arms — until now.

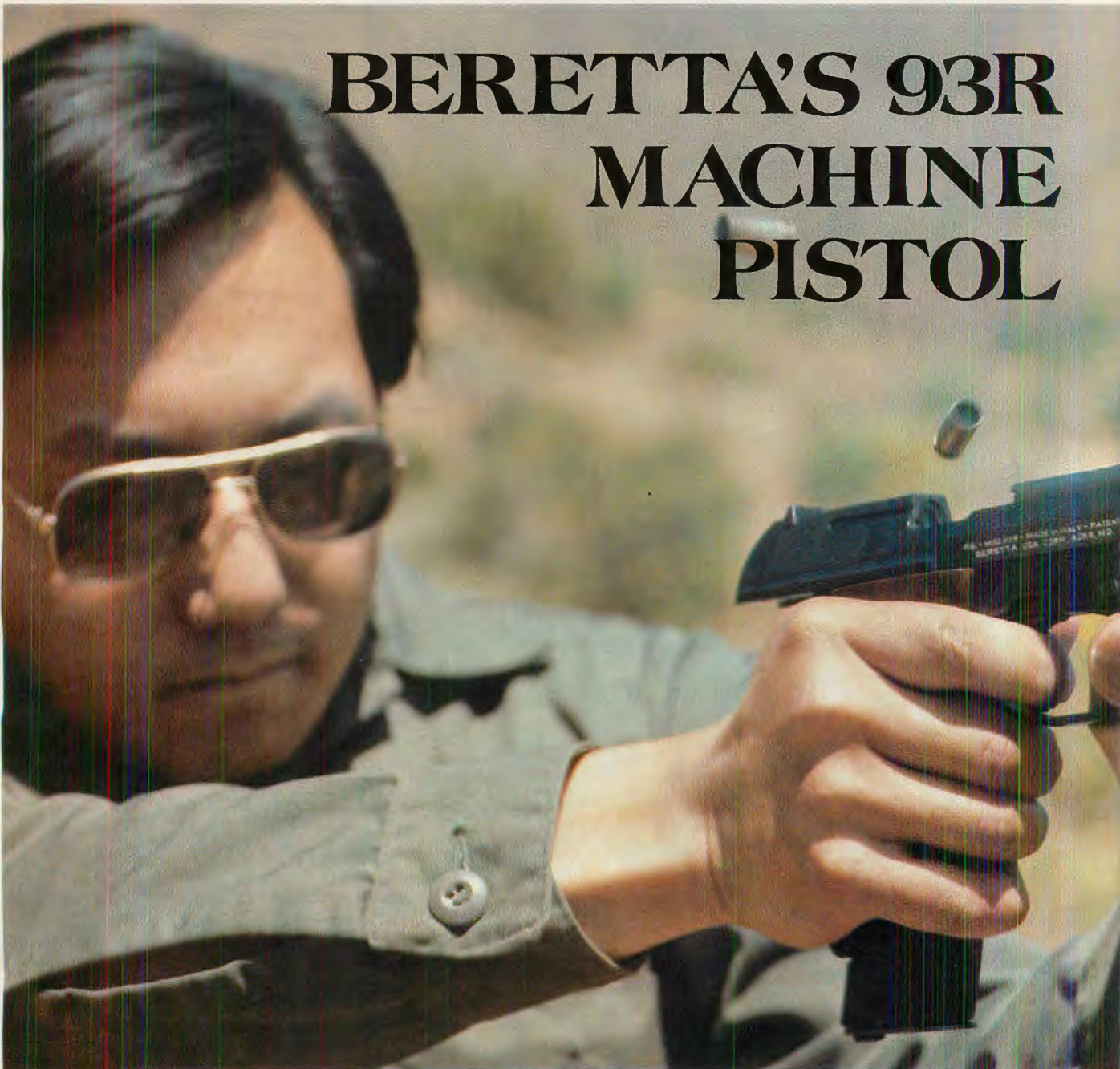
Exactly, what is a machine pistol? Is it different enough from a submachine gun to justify a separate category? Both fire pistol cartridges. Both are capable of full-auto fire. The shoulder stocks of many submachine guns are detachable (some more quickly than others). Many machine pistols are also fitted with detachable shoulder stocks (which in many instances have also served as holsters). The essential differences are size and origin.

Submachine guns start in the design phase as just that (carbine-like selective-fire weapons chambered for pistol cartridges). Invariably, machine pistols have been more-or-less-extensive selective-fire modifications of pre-existing auto-pistol designs. They are then, by definition, smaller and more compact than most submachine guns. Weapons like the Mini-UZI and Sterling Mk7 Para Pistol tend to blur this distinction. But remember their origin. They are, in essence, scaled-down submachine guns.

Machine pistols were first successfully marketed by the Spanish. The Royal machine pistol, an external copy of the Mauser Model 1896 "Broomhandle" pistol, with cleverly simplified lockwork, was produced in Eibar by the Beistegui Hermanos and introduced in 1927. It was followed in 1928 by the Astra 901, another weapon which resembled the Mauser Model 1896 in external appearance only. In 1930 the Star factory introduced its first selective-fire machine pistol. It was based upon an improvement of the locked-breech Browning system.

Threatened by the success of the Spanish-made machine pistols, in 1930 Mauser responded with a selective-fire version of the Model 1896 called the *Schnellfeuerpistole* (rapid-fire pistol). Early models were designed by Joseph Nickl, but their functioning proved unsatisfactory and a second version, designed by Karl Westinger, was brought out in 1932. Both are referred to as the Model 712, but the Westinger design was the successful one. Its production continued until 1938, by which time about 98,000 Schnellfeuers had been made. Far and away the greatest

# BERETTA'S 93R MACHINE PISTOL



number of these were sold to the Chinese, who were greatly enamored with the machine-pistol concept.

Despite isolated instances of its use (such as by the Waffen SS) during WWII, the machine pistol was relegated to relative obscurity during the war years, and the submachine gun prevailed. Machine pistols were given scant attention in the years following the war. Large stocks of WWII-vintage weapons remained and there was little incentive for new small-arms-design projects, especially in so esoteric an area.

But the concept was not dead. During the surge of international rearmament which started in the 1950s, the Soviet Union introduced the Stechkin machine pistol (also known as the APS = Automatic Pistol Stechkin) in caliber 9x18mm Makarov. Issued with a shoulder-stock holster, the APS comes with a 20-round staggered box magazine. It is blowback-operated and is provided with a cyclic-rate reducer, which brings it down to 750 rpm. The Stechkin is a machine pistol in the classic sense.

With the exception of Heckler & Koch's interesting

VP-70, NATO producers have paid little heed to the machine pistol. Enter the Beretta 93R (R = *raffica* = burst). While its direct antecedents are quite clearly the 92 series pistols, the 93R is the extension of a design process which commenced with the 951A machine pistol. The 951A is, in turn, derived from the Beretta Model 951 pistol (also known as the Model 1951 SL). This pistol's short recoil system makes use of a falling locking block which is driven downward to disengage the slide from the barrel and halt the rearward travel of the barrel. This operating principle, taken from the Walther P-38, was carried over to the 92 series pistols. All have inertia-type firing pins with coil springs.

The Model 951 pistol, used by the Italian, Israeli, Egyptian and Nigerian armed forces, has an eight-round magazine (a 10-round magazine, which protruded slightly below the frame, was also available), an awkward push-through pin-type safety located at the top rear of the frame and is single-action.

The Model 951A machine pistol was provided with a bulky folding-forward handgrip which helped to control

## A Burst Controlled Blaster

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



**ABOVE:** A machine pistol in the truest sense: With fore-grip extended, Beretta's 93R provides accurate close-range shooting in three-shot mode. **LEFT CENTER:** Barrel of 93R is 6.14 inches long. Three vertical cuts on each side of the barrel make an effective muzzle brake. **LEFT:** Sensible selector switch points out three dots for burst fire, single white dot for semi-auto. Unfortunately, safety lever behind selector cannot be reached by hand in firing position without grip shift.



Beretta 93R machine pistol (left), with folding fore-grip extended and folding buttstock attached, shows relationship to Model 923B, its immediate antecedent.

muzzle climb during full-auto fire. No shoulder stock was designed or issued for this weapon. The selector switch was located on the frame's right side, just above the rear of the trigger guard. The cyclic rate was 750 rpm. A few were exported to Pakistan, and limited quantities, fitted with sound suppressors, went to Italian internal security forces.

Beretta has expended no small amount of time and funding on development of its 93R. The 300-year-old Pietro Beretta Company of Brescia, Italy, was among the very first to manufacture submachine guns (see "Beretta's Mean [Sub] Machine," SOF, March '83). It comes as no surprise that their expertise has produced a state-of-the-art machine pistol. But it's refreshing to see a major design program in this long-neglected area of small-arms technology.

Starting with the proven and highly regarded Model 92 pistol (see "Son of a Winner: Beretta's 92 SB," SOF, November '82), the Italians focused on the single greatest bedevilment of the machine pistol — unacceptably large burst groups (or "cones of fire") during full-auto fire.

The 93R's barrel is 6.14 inches long, about an inch and a quarter longer than that of the 92 SB. Three vertical slots have been cut on each side of the barrel near the muzzle end, toward the top surface. Propellant gases escaping from these slots exert a downward force on the barrel to assist in counteracting the sharp upward climb of the weapon during full-auto fire. This slotted barrel can also be used in the 92 SB pistol. In addition, its muzzle brake serves as a flash hider.

The trigger guard has been enlarged considerably and an ingenious spring-loaded folding fore-grip has been added to the beefed-up front end. When holstered or firing in the semiauto mode, the fore-grip remains folded under the frame. In burst-fire, the support hand grasps the extended fore-grip with the thumb looped through the trigger guard. This arrangement affords an extremely secure, comfortable two-hand hold.

When there is time to do so, a folding metal buttstock may be attached to the 93R. Two pins on the front part of the stock quickly mate with two holes in the frame. A spring-loaded latch is pushed into a notch at the rear of the frame, firmly fixing the stock to the weapon. When the stock is used in conjunction with the fore-grip, the viability of the machine pistol concept — engaging targets at longer-than-normal pistol range — begins to have substance. When not in use, the stock folds compactly, but only when removed from the weapon. Folding downward, the butt portion will hit the magazine before full closure. Bad design, that — but easily remedied by redesigning the butt itself to fold.

Cyclic rate of the 93R is 1,100 rpm, which is somewhat higher than that of the Mauser Schnellfeuer (900 rpm), but about average for a machine pistol. It is this very peculiarity — cyclic rates hovering around 1,000 rpm — combined with their light weight and usually unstable handling characteristics, that most often has crippled the machine pistol's potential. And most are thus useful for little more than assassination at close range or crowd control — bullet dispersion is so great that to fire accurately you must use the semiautomatic mode. On full-auto, if you jam the muzzle of a machine pistol into someone's groin, you will see the final round of the magazine enter the brain cap before you've had enough response time to release the trigger.

However, the Germans learned during WWII that if MG 42 gunners could be trained to fire short bursts only, the gun's high cyclic rate (often approaching 1,500 rpm) would produce smaller cones of fire downrange than machine guns with slower cyclic rates fired in longer shot bursts. And so, the 93R's cyclic rate of 1,100 rpm turns vice to virtue when coupled with its very positive three-shot burst control.

The 93R's massive slide is heavier than the 92 SB's. Its square-cut top portion shows in its weight (41.3 ounces with empty 20-round magazine for the 93R as opposed to only



## At two meters, including a 180-degree pivot, but without a draw, Yuen was able to put three-shot bursts into all five targets' kill zones (a total of 15 rounds!) in 2.2 seconds.

34.5 ounces for the 92 SB with empty 15-round magazine). The added weight further inhibits muzzle climb during full-auto fire.

The 20-round 93R magazine extends about an inch and a quarter below the frame. The exposed portion is covered by a plastic sleeve which is grooved on the front side as is the frame itself. With one round in the chamber you have seven three-shot bursts to work with. (If that's not enough, you needed more than a machine pistol.) The 20-round 93R magazine and the 15-round 92 SB magazine are interchangeable in either weapon.

The 93R is single-action only, the three-shot burst mechanism having obviated the 92 SB's double-action feature. I suppose we just can't have everything.

The 93R's thumb safety is just plain dreadful. Located immediately behind the selector switch, its shape and location resemble that of the Mauser "Broomhandle" and its copies. If anything, it is far worse. In contrast to the Broomhandle's safety, pushing downward on the small, checkered button places the 93R on "safe." Pushing upward takes you off "safe" — an impossible task for anyone but Plastic Man while the hand is in the firing position, since the safety lever is to the very rear of the frame.

The magazine-release button is the same as the 92 SB's, located to the rear of the trigger guard where it can be pushed easily by the thumb of the shooting hand. It can be moved from the left to the right side of the frame for left-handed shooters. Magazines consistently fall freely and without hang-up. Walnut grips are standard, but they are not interchangeable with those of the 92 SB due to the inletting required to accommodate the three-shot burst mechanism.

To date, more than 1,500 rounds have shuffled through my 93R. I can report only two malfunctions. Both were stovepipes. Both occurred after more than 500 rounds without any cleaning of the weapon. And both occurred with 1949 Yugoslav submachine-gun ammo which is undoubtedly starting to turn sour.

The 93R's trigger pull was clean and crisp right out of the

box — not the slightest hint of drag or backlash. And very light compared to the average submachine gun.

Beretta has really put it all together in this compact little package of doom and destruction. Anyone who goes into a test and evaluation of a machine pistol without some very black reservations hasn't fired many. Surprise, surprise! The 93R's hit probability borders on the twilight zone.

My cohort, Mark Yuen (a graduate of Gunsite's 499 course), and I decided to first try the 93R's hand on the "Dozier Drill" developed at Gunsite — an ironic title, as Gen. Dozier was kidnapped by five Italian Red Brigade terrorists. The drill usually consists of a draw, pivot and the engagement of five silhouette targets. The distance can be anything from two to seven meters. We had to eliminate the draw as there is no holster for the 93R (Beretta has informed me that shoulder rigs in both leather and nylon will be available soon). A good time is four seconds and the record is 2.5 seconds.

At two meters, including a 180-degree pivot, but without a draw, Yuen was able to put three-shot bursts into all five targets' kill zones (a total of 15 rounds!) in 2.2 seconds.

Without a pivot (precluded by my gimp leg), I was able to duplicate this effort in 2.4 seconds. I guess I just have to plan on never turning my back to the bastards. Mark's time at seven meters was a respectable 3.4 seconds. Some of the three-shot groups, I might add, were less than four inches.

All of this was accomplished using a somewhat modified Weaver hold. With the left arm bent and stabilizing the front portion of the weapon by grasping the fore-grip in the prescribed manner and exerting heavy downward pressure, the right arm must also be slightly bent. The sights were used, but not the buttstock.

When the buttstock is fitted and the 93R employed at longer ranges as a semiauto carbine, the results are equally amazing. In the kneeling position, kill-zone strikes at 150 meters are so common that they offer little challenge after the first magazine. All this at a weight far less than half that of the despicable MAC 10.

Field-stripping procedures are identical to the 92 SB. Just press the disassembly latch's release button (after clearing the weapon) and rotate the latch counter-clockwise until it stops. Pull the entire slide group forward and separate it from the frame. Reassemble in the reverse order. The slide stop does not have to be aligned with a link upon reassembly since the barrel recoils along a straight path and there is no link or cam. Some designers feel this induces less vibration in the system, but the benefits, if any, are probably inconsequential.

Already in service with Italian security forces, the 93R deserves a close look by antiterrorist and special operations units, such as GSG9, the British SAS and U.S. *operatives*, who can use the firepower and hit potential it offers in a 2½-pound package. Beretta has combined a three-shot burst control, high cyclic rate, an effective muzzle brake and a cleverly designed fore-grip to bring the machine pistol concept from moribund anachronism to glory.

Fit and finish of the 93R, as to be expected from Beretta, are outstanding. Costing approximately \$900, the 93R is available to law-enforcement agencies and qualified Class 3 dealers from its exclusive importer, Beretta U.S.A. Corp. (Dept. SOF, 17601 Indian Head Highway, Accokeek, MD 20607). ☒

### BERETTA 93R SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: 9mm Parabellum  
Weight: (empty, with 20-rd. magazine): 41.3 oz.  
Barrel length: 6.14 inches  
Overall length: 9.45 inches  
Length of stock: extended, 14.5 inches; folded, 7.7 inches  
Width: 1.46 inches  
Height (with 20-rd. magazine): 6.7 inches  
Sights: White-dot blade front, integral with slide, notched white-dot fixed rear, dovetailed to slide, sighting radius: 6.3 inches  
Method of operation: Oscillating block locking system, short recoil, exposed single-action hammer, semiautomatic or 3-shot burst fire  
Full-auto cyclic rate: 1,100 rpm  
Magazines: staggered box type, 20- and 15-rd. capacities  
Price: Approximately \$900  
Exclusive importer: Beretta U.S.A. Corp., Dept. SOF, 17601 Indian Head Highway, Accokeek, MD 20607



# THE ARMBRUST

## Panzerfaust of the Future

by Larry Dring

CONDUCTING the "Man Against Tank" seminar at the Third Annual SOF Convention brought me in contact with some people who love making life hard for Ivan. One of these dedicated devotees of destruction, Doug Ragsdale, asked me after class one day what I knew about the German Armbrust antitank weapon and whether I would be interested in having one. I told him I had never heard of the Armbrust and yes, I would love to have one. "Ask," he said, "and it shall be delivered." So I asked and it was delivered, right to my door via UPS, complete with instructions. To say the least, I was impressed.

In 1915 the British developed an armored tractor and called it a tank. Early models were unsuccessful, but with continued improvements, many worthy designs had been fielded by 1930. By 1942 the tank held a definitive position in the world's weapons

Firing sequence of Armbrust: A.) Prior to firing; B.) Armbrust is fired, projectile and countermass start moving; C.) Projectile and countermass leave tube; D.) Two pistons seal off emission of flash, smoke and sound. Photo: European Defence Products





Larry Dring demonstrates how Armbrust affords gunner ultra-low prone firing position due to side-mounted sighting system.

Dring demonstrates sling-carry position for Armbrust antitank weapon.



Dring holds Armbrust with built-in carrying handle.



Man-portable Armbrust has maximum range of approximately 1,500 meters. Operational range against armor is up to 300 meters. In anti-personnel version, Armbrust is effective against infantry, materiel and soft-skinned vehicles at ranges up to 500 meters. Photo: European Defence Products

arsenals and had earned the respect of infantrymen.

However, the tank is not invincible — one just needs a good weapon and a lot of guts to defeat it. And at the same time that technicians of war were desperately working to create the perfect tank, there were other technicians working to create the perfect antitank weapon.

In 1914, U.S. Navy Commander Cleland Davis took out a patent on a weapon that had two barrels facing in opposite directions. The forward barrel was loaded with the explosive shell and the rearward barrel was loaded with a similar weight shell of fine shot and grease. Bang! Since each had an equal weight of shot and shell, the barrel stayed stationary.

This first recoilless weapon was developed as an anti-zeppelin gun in 2, 6 and 12 pounds. The end of WWI saw it shelved.

WWII gave us the famous “bazooka” — the 2.36-inch Rocket Launcher. In Europe it was never an adequate weapon, but it proved successful against the light Japanese tanks. During the Korean War the 2.36 gave way to the 3.5-inch Rocket Launcher, a weapon with greater range and harder punch, which remained in our inventory until 1968.

The Germans improved on our bazooka and came up with several weapons of their own which caught the terrified attention of our WWII tank crews. The most famous of these was the *Panzerfaust*, a self-propelled rocket with a disposable launcher, which came in four different sizes. These gave birth to the Soviet RPG (Rocket Propelled Grenade) series of antitank weapons. The current RPG-7 holds several surprises for the unwary gunner, notably the ferocious back blast that can be dangerous when fired from prone or in enclosed spaces and the fact that if the round does not hit its intended target it will self-destruct between 600 to 900 meters. Surprise! Surprise!

The American counterpart to the RPG is the M72 LAW (Light Antitank Weapon). Like the BAR, some troops swear by the LAW and some swear at it. I have found it to be a good weapon, when it works. It is also worth a million laughs if fired into a crowded bunker. One characteristic of all these weapons is that they have a severe back blast and make a loud ear-shattering report. If the gunner is not to blow himself up he must be out in the open. Not one of these weapons can be fired indoors and they all draw attention to the gunner. It takes a gutsy grunt to say hello to an enemy tank

*Continued on page 82*



# SO LONG, LARRY

## SOF Loses a Friend

by Jim Graves

**P**ace finally came to Lawrence W. Dring II.

Dring, whose almost legendary career in Special Forces was described in a three-part *Soldier of Fortune* magazine series — February, March and April 1982 — died 25 August 1983 of a seizure and heart attack caused by complications from wounds he suffered in Vietnam. Dring, 45, is survived by his wife, Rebecca, and two sons, Lawrence W. Dring III and David T. Dring.

To say Larry Dring was a rare, complex and wonderful human being doesn't do justice to the man.

In four tours in Vietnam — most of it with MIKE Force (Mobile Guerrilla Force) in the Central Highlands — Dring

carved out a career as a soldier that, frankly, I don't know who could match.

Dring started as an enlisted man and came out in 1968 as a captain. Along the way he earned, among other decorations, many of the medals *grunts* have respect for: two Silver Stars, four Bronze Stars, two Soldier's Medals, the Cambodian *Medaille Militaire*, four Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry and five Purple Hearts.

The stories Dring told about his Vietnam experiences inevitably were met with a bit of amused disbelief — partially because his delivery was intended to elicit just that response — but they don't even compare with the stories *told about him* by other soldiers.

I preferred Dring's versions. Dring always managed somehow to make them amusing. Even the stories about his medals could crack you up. He picked up his first Purple Heart early in the 1960s — one of the first 50 to be awarded in Vietnam — before anyone in Washington had figured out Vietnam was a campaign and those who went there should get a campaign ribbon. He turned down his fifth Bronze Star with a request that it be downgraded to an Army Commendation Medal. Dring said he already had four of the red ones so he'd prefer a green ARCOM: He thought it would look better on his khakis.

Strolling down a street in Okinawa, Dring was challenged by a Marine who couldn't believe you could have just a Good Conduct Ribbon and a Purple Heart. When the skeptical Marine asked, "Where did you get that?" Dring responded, "Vietnam."

"Where's that?" the Marine asked.

Dring's response was a classic: "Just go to Hong Kong and turn left. Don't worry, you guys will get your chance soon enough."

He was also pretty good at predicting the future.

Just before we published the Dring series, written by Jim Morris, I got to meet Dring at the second *Soldier of Fortune* convention in Scottsdale in 1981.

With his amusing wit and impeccable character, Dring was a smash with our staff and became a close friend of most of us here at SOF.

Dring, who was jokingly referred to as the "Resident Guerrilla" at the Citadel, where he lectured on guerrilla warfare and other military topics, did occasional journalistic assignments for SOF writing either about weapons or Lebanon. In typical fashion, he couldn't remain uninvolved in the Lebanon situation and, as he said, "I got into the woodwork over there." In other words, the Lebanese Forces got some free advice and help.

I especially enjoyed the routine Larry and I had of ribbing each other about the respective merits of the Special Forces and the Marine Corps. It was a routine we never tired of — nor took seriously. But in the end, he got me.

Just a few days before he died, Larry sent me a stuffed dog, wearing a cammo cover and a USMC sweater. The dog's not a respectable USMC-issue bulldog — ferocious type — but rather a sad-eyed mutt, type unknown.

Sadly, I never got to thank him for the dog or for his larger gift to me and everyone who knew him. I never got to say, "Larry, your greatest gift to us is how you've enriched our lives and helped us deal with this crazy world by making us laugh about it."

Then again, there's no way I could have said that to Larry.

So long, Larry, rest in peace, my friend. ☠

# QUICK-DRAW ROB TAKES 1983 IPSC NATIONALS

Text & Photos by Jake Jatras



STANDING at the self-service pump, the traveler from Arizona reacted quickly to the threat from the pair hiding behind the large sign — then still using the 4x4 truck for cover, he fired twice at the lone silhouette running through the garage door. Dropping behind the truck, he crawled forward and made a short dash to a pile of tires only to face three more adversaries. Seven quick shots and the encounter was over. The entire action had lasted only 14 seconds.

Quick shooting is Rob Leatham's forte, and with performances like the one above on "Gasoline Alley," the "hose master" from Arizona took his place in the ranks of United States International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) champions.

More than 300 of the finest practical pistol shooters met head-on in Milan, Ill., for the annual National test, one that took on special meaning since the contest also served as a qualifier for the upcoming IPSC World Championships to be held in York County, Virginia. Each competitor wanted to do his best and the pressure to make the U.S. Gold Team was intense.

The format for the contest was once again a "semi-surprise" with the description of the stages being handed out only the day before the actual shooting began. Like a challenging golf course, each match was laden with traps so that even a slight mental lapse or errant shot was costly.

The "Devil's Hole Defense" is an up-close and furious test in which the draw is King and accuracy Queen. The big guns wasted no time in setting the pace.

Each contestant faced three buff-cardboard silhouettes: one slightly to the right at four yards, one on the left at five yards and one straight ahead at seven yards. The seven-yard target was partially covered by a no-shoot. Any hit (even a nick) on the no-shoot was a 10-point penalty.

The match was scored "limited Comstock." Shooters could only fire a set number of rounds, but a dropped shot remained a 10-point penalty. Special timers counted shots and recorded the time from the start signal on the last shot of each string. Total points, less any penalty, were then divided by the total time for a score.

Stage One involved a single head shot on each target. Targets had to be shot in order of proximity — right, left, then center. This was repeated once and targets scored. Stage Two involved three separate "double taps" — two quick shots on each target. Stage Three required one shot on each target. This was repeated.

Stage Four required two shots on each target, once again in order. This was also repeated. On Stage Five only the strong hand was allowed for two shots on each target.

Ross Seyfried shoots from gas pumps on "Gasoline Alley Encounter," while CRO Lee Hinders watches for procedure.

This year's IPSC U.S. Champ Rob Leatham takes off from window barricade on "Run and Jump" assault match.

Just how important is speed over accuracy in such a contest? Well, Smith & Wesson's Tommygun Campbell answered the question by netting 50 points in penalties, but because of his blinding speed still surviving to place well up in the pack.

Arkansas's Ross Carter took the match with some great shooting, followed by three-time Bianchi Cup Champion Mickey Fowler and two-time IPSC Champ John Shaw.

Match Two, the "Advanced Military Modified," is a classic IPSC accuracy test with shooting done in five stages from 50 to 10 yards. It was a 50-round possible 250-point match with each string of fire run under set, or par, times.

Most IPSC clubs conduct the "Advanced Military" once a year and the scores have increased toward the 250 mark. This year three shooters managed to score 246 points and the tie was broken by A-zone hits on the next most difficult accuracy test.

Jim Zubiena from California came out on top, followed by John Shaw and fellow Californian Mark Day.

"Grocery Store Panic," aka Safeway Shootout, turned out to be the disaster match for many of the seasoned competitors. No-shoots filled the aisles and one was forced to twist and lean to get a shot at the array of shoot targets.

As Chief Range Officer Shari Freer of Omaha, Neb., led each squad through the course, the title aspirants realized the hazards of the course could spell trouble.

After each squad was briefed on the course, the score cards were shuffled and then the shooting order announced. In this manner no one handgunner was forced to be the icebreaker on any stage.

Each competitor began facing the first set of targets with his hands grasping a shopping cart. The start signal was a light. When the light came on, the shooter engaged the first set of three silhouettes from the shooting box. The targets all were partially hidden by no-shoots in the aisles and one had to exercise control.

Many of the shooters fired at the easy (all things being relative) target first, then the more difficult ones. Others used the reverse order, rationalizing that as one sped up and the *adrenalin* began to flow the amount of control might begin to diminish.

Each target had to have a minimum of two hits on it. After the first set, shooters set out for the next group. Once inside firing box "B," each shooter had to engage five more targets and finally a stop plate. Targets once again were difficult to engage through the no-shoots, and to hit the stop plate took some skill. (The stop plate was painted black, adding to the difficulty.)

As CRO Freer examined each no-shoot and announced it free of hits a sigh of relief came from the shooter. Some competitors were more relieved than others. When it comes to hostage hitting this course set a new record. Some of the no-shoot silhouettes actually had to be replaced because of the number of hits!

Rob Leatham took the express checkout



lane on this match, with another Arizona shooter, Lee Souter, right behind. World Champ Ross Seyfried is a quick shopper himself and came in third.

Guy's Gas Station had good business as "Gasoline Alley Encounter," Match Four, also proved tougher than anticipated.

Shooters began each run in a shooting box with their hands on the gas pump. On the start signal each had to engage a pair of targets by a large sign about 20 yards away. This required shooting over the hood of the mock 4x4 truck. A moving target took off on the start and after shooting the first two one could shoot at the "mover." This was an optional target, but most (unless they forgot) took the chance to get a few extra points.

Once the gun was made safe, the shooter scrambled under the truck and ran to the next fire box behind a stack of tires. Three targets remained and a stop plate. One target was half-covered by a no-shoot and, for those who were pushing, this chap generated a few penalty points.

Before the first shot on this stage, I asked master IPSC tactician Mike Dalton of California what a solid time would be for the course. He felt a 15-second run would be good for the top guys, and as usual he was on the money.

Seyfried dropped a hit, Mike Plaxco hit a no-shoot, Mike Fichman almost forgot the mover. Each day the reports of disasters flowed to the Stat Office. A match that on the surface presented itself as straight-up

CRO Kim Ahrends watches as Jim Loveland shoots from barricade on "Run and Jump" assault match.

assault began to take its toll on the experienced pistoleros.

Rob Leatham didn't hang around for his green stamps and with a headlong dash of just under 14 seconds snatched up another first-place medal. Brian Enos, fresh from his Bianchi Cup victory, displaced any doubts about his speed and came in a close second. Ray Neal dug in and shot third.

After engaging each target with a minimum of two rounds and making the gun safe, shooters could proceed through the window and advance to a narrow barricade.

From the wall barricade competitors engaged two targets on the right side that had a no-shoot in front of them, and then another mirror set on the left side. (Shooters were allowed to engage either set first.)

Next shooters ran to a door and, going through it, had to shoot a target through a small window. Finally they advanced through another door to face two targets partially hidden behind a wall, and then a stop plate.

Murphy's Law was in effect and for some the "Run & Jump" turned into the "Run, Skip, Hop and Curse." Californian Ray Neal stopped to open the door and three magazines popped out of his gunbelt — unnoticed, of course. After shooting through the window and going out the back door, Neal discovered the empty carriers,



but had no more ammunition.

The no-shoots took more than a few rounds. Match winner Leatham had one so close that when I and National Range Officer Institute Director Dave Churilla examined it we couldn't believe it had not hit the no-shoot. (Leatham assured us he would light some candles on Sunday!)

Mike Plaxco, last year's champ, was second and John Shaw third. Match Six, "Twice As Fast," was another speed match. The concept was first observed at the '82 IPSC Kansas State Championships, and has been included in the IPSC World Shoot VI.

Shooters faced three silhouettes. Starting from the "surrender" position (wrists held shoulder high) in a shooting box, each competitor on the start signal had to engage T-1, T-2, then a steel plate and T-3. Then he had to hit the stop plate.

The catch was that as soon as a bullet struck the rectangular steel plate, the plate fell backward bringing a no-shoot up in front of T-3. Two shots were needed before the no-shoot almost covered the shoot target.

The stage was repeated on another set of targets. Times for the eight shots were running in the five-second range with a few in the fours.

John Sayle, Ohio, last year placed third in the Nationals and up to this match was looking good for a spot on the U.S. Gold Team. On his first run he had a time of 3.8 seconds, the quickest of the match. The next run

brought his last shots of the match.

CRO Dave Arnold ran Sayle through the instructions, gave him the stand-by command, then "ready" and the start signal sounded. Sayle drew, engaged the two open targets, hit the no-shoot activator steel plate, and fired one round at the shoot target T-3. He hesitated, and then swung to the stop plate. The dropped shot on T-3 cost dearly. The 10-point penalty put Sayle out of the running.

I was standing with Ray Chapman, who at the time thought Sayle had experienced a gun malfunction, but that was not the case. Sayle had told himself to "back off" and make a good run, but the thought process backfired. In a big match with a lot of pressure, even the slightest error can be unrecoverable. In this case it was.

Rob Leatham once again led the way, followed by Mark Day and Mike Plaxco. All three were smooth and steady.

Like last year the man-versus-man shoot-off was shot for cash and a special award sponsored by Bianchi Leather.

The top 16 shooters competed in a single elimination tournament that involved shooting at steel plates and the use of the equipment from the "Twice As Fast" match, only this go-round had the stop plate behind the pop-up no-shoot.

Shooters were paired off so that the number-one competitor should, if everything went well, face that number-two shooter in the final bout. For all but the finals each bout was the best two out of three. National

Range Officer Institute Instructor Steve Herberth designed the test, and it was officiated by NROI Director Dave Churilla and U.S. Practical Shooting Association Director Dave Arnold.

Shooters began behind a small fence with a bar 36 inches off the ground. From the "surrender" position they engaged several eight-inch round-steel plates, reloaded, and finally the steel no-shoot activator, and then the stop plate. If the no-shoot popped up and one could not hit the stop plate, the competitor had the option of kneeling, or going prone to hit it.

On the first run, Brian Enos experienced such a dilemma and went to prone and hit the plate. Unfortunately, he placed his weapon over the foul line and his run was disallowed.

Bout after bout Rick Castelow of Tennessee established himself as the man with the quick draw and fast gun. In the final round Castelow found himself facing experienced (with a capital E) Ross Seyfried.

Seyfried on the winning run missed the stop plate and, going to prone, realized his weapon was over the foul line. No one has ever moved backward on the ground as fast as Seyfried, who fired the winning shot from his new position.

Richard Nichols of Bianchi Gunleather presented Seyfried with the trophy. Seyfried also received \$1,000 from the Milan Rifle Club.

Each contest was factored for the number of rounds fired and the degree of difficulty. The winner of each match received the total amount of points possible, and then each other competitor earned a ratio of the winner's points based on his score compared to that of the winner.

The point factor was: 1. Devil's Hole — 18; 2. Advanced Military — 21; 3. Grocery Store — 16; 4. Gasoline Alley — 14; 5. Run & Jump — 17, and 6. Twice As Fast — 14. The total maximum points therefore were 100.

Rob Leatham certainly set a new record pace as he scored an overall 98.0947 points to take the Championship title. His friend and fellow Arizonan Brian Enos came in second with 94.5906 and John Shaw scored 91.6299. Bill Wilson netted 89.5124 and Tom Campbell tallied 89.0226.

More than any other Nationals, this match brought to the front the new champions of IPSC. The contest was also important since it resolved who would represent the United States in its first title defense for the World Championship.

The new United States World Team will be Ross Seyfried (Gold Team captain), Mike Plaxco, Rob Leatham, Brian Enos and Tom Campbell. The alternate will be Bill Wilson.

Practical shooting in the United States now involves over 200 affiliated clubs and thousands of competitors. Sharpen your skills with a handgun in a sport based on a defensive situation. Take up the challenge. Contact: IPSC, P.O. Box 626, Sioux City, IA 51102. ☛

# URGENT! URGENT! URGENT!

**Memo:** To all NRA Life Members & Annual Members of five years' continuous membership

**From:** Robert K. Brown, Editor & Publisher, *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*

**Subject:** Nominations for the NRA Board of Directors

1. I am tired of the feuding that has been going on in the National Rifle Association during the past three years. This internal squabbling, born of personal ambition, plays into the hands of our enemies: those who wish to disarm us. We must present a united front to the anti-gun nuts, and stop fighting among ourselves. Therefore, I have decided to run for the NRA Board of Directors this year. I urgently need your endorsement if you are a Life Member or an Annual Member who has paid dues for the last five consecutive years. Only by securing a sufficient number of petition signatures from voting members can I guarantee that my name will be on the ballot. The other way to be nominated is through selection by the Nominating Committee, but I am not sure I have the necessary pull with those gentlemen. I need your help. I propose as well the nomination of Major **William Askins**, Colonel **Rex Applegate** and Mr. **Jake Jatras** as like-minded candidates whose election will serve to quell the divisiveness and turmoil which has marred the activities of the NRA

during the past year or two, as well as bring a bit of new blood to the Board of Directors.

2. Each of the *Soldier of Fortune* candidates has distinguished credentials as a shooter and man of action. **Askins**, a Marine pilot in Vietnam and a crack pistol shot, has led an adventurous life around the world. **Applegate**, a renowned author and shooter, served in the OSS during World War II. **Jatras**, a combat pistol shooter, is the U.S. Regional Director of the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC). These guys have the background and character to look after your interests and lead the NRA as it should be led. You know my history well enough: I am plain spoken, will look you right in the eye, and will call it the way I see it.

3. The deadline for submission of the petition is early November, so there is no time to lose. Write me for copies of the NRA petition form. I encourage you to observe the nomination rules attached to the petition form and circulate the petition among your friends who are qualified voting members. We need your signature to win.

4. I also want to hear from you about what the NRA should be doing, if you have had any problems, and how I can improve the NRA, for our mutual benefit, should I be elected to the board of directors.

## ROBERT K. BROWN:

Lt. Col. U.S. Army Reserve, Special Forces Team Leader in Vietnam, Graduate Command and General Staff College, military parachutist including jump wings from Thailand, Guatemala and El Salvador, competitive pistol shooter, OIC Advanced Marksmanship Unit, XVIII Airborne Corps, big game hunter U.S. & Africa, author of numerous articles on guns and shooting, arranged for "transfer" of 5,000 rounds of AK-74 ammo obtained from Afghanistan to the U.S. government and turned over first AK-74 rounds to NRA for testing. Founder, publisher, editor and owner of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*.

## WILLIAM ASKINS:

Major U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, helicopter pilot in Vietnam, 17 decorations, military parachutist, competitive pistol shooter, National Record holder in the pistol event of the Modern Pentathlon, author of scores of articles on guns, hunting and shooting, big game hunter and birdshooter, now Executive Director of Game Conservation International (Game COIN), a leading wildlife conservation organization. Former operations officer of the Central Intelligence Agency with 10 years service abroad. Has served as Executive Assistant to the Executive Vice President of the NRA. Well acquainted with the workings of the National Rifle Association. Resident of San Antonio, Texas.

## REX APPLGATE:

Scottsburg, Oregon. Lt. Col. U.S. Army Retired, Public Safety Consultant, military and police firearms expert, gun writer, pioneer of police and military close combat and combat shooting techniques. A major in the OSS during World War II and author of *Kill or Get Killed*, *Riot Control-Material and Techniques*, and *Scouting and Patrolling*. He was a famous close-quarter fighting instructor even during World War II and has continued to develop both techniques and tools for police and the military.

## JAKE JATRAS:

U.S. Regional director of the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC), co-founder of the United States Practical Shooting Association (USPSA), International Range-master of IPSC, managing editor of *Combat Shooters Report*, contributing editor for *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* and *Combat Handguns*, and director of SOF Three-Gun International. He has shot muzzle-loaders for 15 years, combat pistol for 10 years and is a successful private businessman with professional and personal interest in gun legislation.

Call *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* (303-449-3750) or write me at P.O. Box 693, Boulder CO 80306 for NRA petition forms.



# NEW!

# NOW!

## SELOUS SCOUTS TOP SECRET WAR



Another *Soldier of Fortune* exclusive coup! In August 1981, Robert K. Brown flew to the Transkei where he was the first journalist ever to interview Ron Reid Daly, former commanding officer of the Selous Scouts and presently a major general commanding the Defense Force of Transkei. Concurrently, he obtained exclusive North American distribution rights for the book, **Selous Scouts Top Secret War**.

For the first time, the complete, inside story of the Rhodesian super-secret Selous Scouts has been told by their tough-as-teak CO. The Selous Scouts, utilizing "psuedo-gang concept" warfare rampaged through terrorist infiltrated territory, seeking out, tracking down and killing terrors. The Scouts also participated in some of the most daring and successful cross-border operations recorded in the annals of military history. They were credited with 68 percent of all terr KIAs!

Probably the most bloody yet successful cross-border op was the Selous strike against a terr camp located at Pungwe,

Mozambique. An air-photo reconnaissance mission over Mozambique alerted Rhodesia's high command to a buildup of terrorists at Pungwe. Then 72 Selous Scouts infiltrated Mozambique in captured, camouflaged terr vehicles, raced to Pungwe base, fooled the terrors into thinking they were a resupply convoy and then opened fire. The final body count: 1,026 terrors dead, thousands wounded. No Scouts were killed, and only five wounded.

As Reid Daly describes it in his book:

"The parade ground suddenly opened up in front of them (the Scouts). There were few men in the column who did not gasp in amazement at the sight that greeted them — thousands of terrorists on parade.

"There could never have been enough rehearsals, briefings and mental preparation to have readied them for the sight which met their eyes."

Reid Daly quotes one Scout: "I just hope we don't run out of ammunition!"

More than 4,000 unsuspecting ZANLA soldiers milled around the vehicles — "... at least one thing was crystal clear ... no one suspected they were Selous Scouts:

"Then one terrorist looked into a soldier's clearly European eyes and raised the alarm. The effect was indescribable.

"Two 20mm cannons, a .50-caliber Browning HMG, three .30-cal. Browning machine guns, one 12.7 Russian HMG and three twin 7.62 FN MAGs plus the individual infantry weapons carried by the Scouts opened up, all at the same time.

"Hundreds of terrorists fell to the ground with the first onslaught of bullets, as though a gale force wind had *blown them* off their feet ... A sustained rate of fire was maintained until all movement on the parade ground had ceased. The crew of one armored car is credited with having killed 150 terrors."

**NOW AVAILABLE**, 424 page, 208,000-word combat classic contains 15 color photos, 89 black and white photos, 17 maps and diagrams. It also describes the activities of the most famous American merc to serve with the Rhodesians, Maj. Jack Murphy.

**Every serious student or practitioner of unconventional and guerrilla warfare needs this book in his library!**

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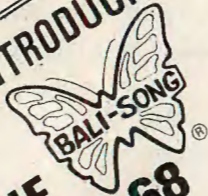
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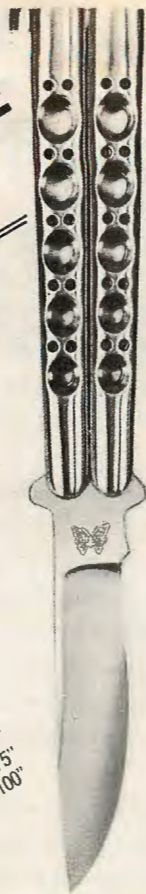
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## ARMBRUST SYSTEM

*Continued from page 75*

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The old axiom, "If you carry it, be able to use it," fits the Armbrust well. Anyone can

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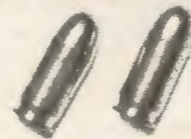


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To understand the weapon and its firing sequence look carefully at the illustration on page 74. Armbrust consists essentially of a launch tube, the fin-stabilized projectile and the countermass (which is made up of about 5,000 small, dull transparent plastic chips) the propellant charge, two pistons and two brake collars. Attached to the tube is the stock, including trigger (which is mechanically locked by the folded pistol grip), the sling, the reflex sight (view finder) and a butt plate. When the trigger is depressed, a piezo-electrical element initiates the primer pellet; this pellet ignites an intermediary charge which in turn causes the main propellant charge to burn. As the pressure between the pistons increases the connecting pin breaks and the expanding gases drive the pistons outward accelerating the projectile and the countermass. Projectile and countermass leave the tube. The two pistons are stopped by the brake collars, and a gas-tight seal is formed, preventing the exit of flash, smoke or sound. The projectile is carried to

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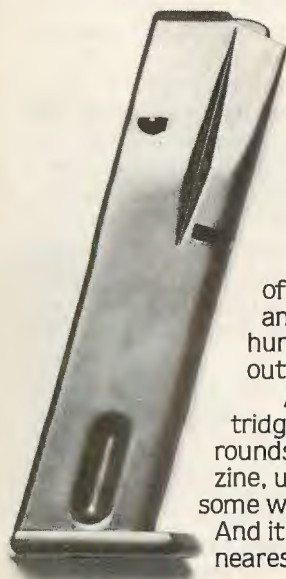
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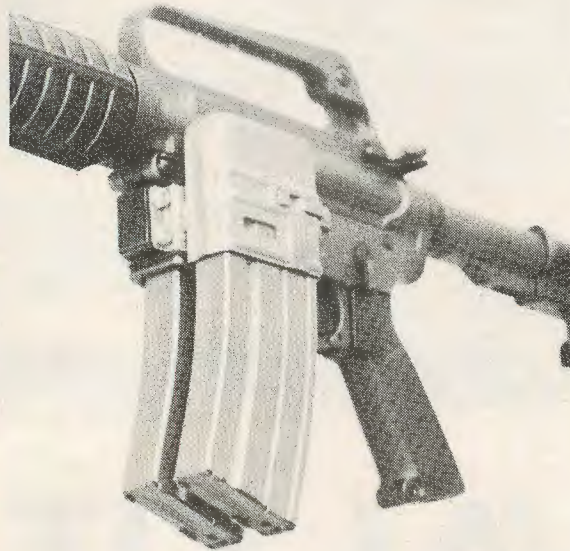
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the target on a ballistic trajectory. The counter-mass is retarded by air resistance, disintegrates and falls to the ground. If the gunner fires from a small confined area, the counter-mass does not rebound from the wall, but is dispersed to all sides without hazard to the gunner, even if the rear end of the launch tube is less than three feet from the obstacle.

Since only a plastic confetti is emitted from the rear, several rounds can be fired from the same place without giving away the position of the gunner. This low signature of no blast, no smoke and low noise adds up to survivability for the gunner, which of course is the most important thing. As George Patton said, "Let that other SOB give his life for his country. It is your job to help him."

Armbrust has a high muzzle velocity, approximately 700 fps, which gives it good flight characteristics and a very high degree of accuracy under field conditions. The sight is graduated out to 500 meters. The sights allow for movement leads. The sight box is superimposed over the vehicle and — squeeze — a junk man's delight. We had some problems with the M72 LAW in Vietnam, mostly caused by the gunners. I used to see grunts place the launcher under the rucksack flap sideways. The tube then protruded on both sides of the man's shoulders and was very susceptible to damage. We used to place them in the pack straight up and down with the firing end down. We hardly ever had a dud although I must admit that the first time I drew a bead on a VC machine gun, I almost bought the farm. I had a clear shot. I extended the tube, took careful aim and fired and fired and fired again. By this time I was the target of the machine gun. Into a drainage ditch I went, cursing the LAW as I sank into the mud. Later one of the Montagnards showed me how to cock the weapon.

Armbrust can be stored at normal temperature with a 10-year shelf life. It is still safe after a 10-meter fall. It is impervious to sand, corrosive atmosphere, dust, water or humidity. Anyone who can fire a rifle can fire an Armbrust. It can be fired standing, kneeling, or prone. It has a pistol-type grip firing device that folds down. The sights are on the left side of the weapon and the shooter can get even lower to the ground than the average rifleman — which gives you a chance to live longer than the guy with the RPG-7. When the pistol grip is held with the right hand, you can reach forward with the left hand and grasp under the tube like one would a rifle. Or, it can be fired like a shoulder-fired machine gun. This is the position I prefer. A butt plate to the rear of the carrying handle is lowered and the left hand pulls down on the carrying handle, firmly holding it to the shoulder *in much* the same way as the shoulder stock on the 1919A6 .30-caliber machine gun. Take aim, squeeze and expect a hit. This makes the average grunt a real potential hazard to Ivan. The capability to fire from inside buildings will cause a rewrite of the FM on urban combat. They might as well mark their maps: CITY — TANKS KEEP OUT!

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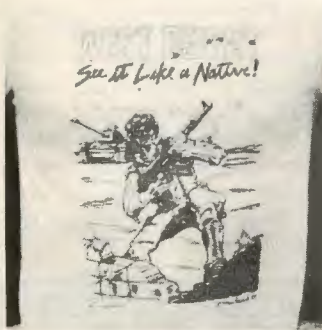
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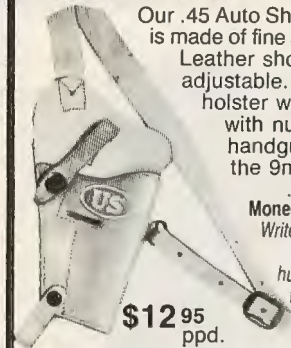
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Armbrust is a very impressive state-of-the-art weapon system. To ignore it would be foolish. We can only pray that the Pentagon paragon who took away jungle sweaters and poncho liners and gave us the black wooly pully and paper plates in lieu of mess kits doesn't get his hooks into this one. The development has been done. The weapons system is here. Let's kill tanks. ☒

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Recently, I came across a fairly new way to make big bucks, but after a thorough study I discarded it because it required too much investment of time, money and personal effort. But my study did serve as inspiration to develop yet another fantastic and unusual wallet-fattener — something that until now has never been done — yet fully complies with the tough set of standards I'm noted for demanding of any potential wealth-producing concept:

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Well, this one goes way beyond my usual rigorous test. Get this: This extraordinary money-maker® allows you to:

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His writings have been used in numerous style and content workshops and accredited courses at such institutions as California State University, UCLA, Fordham, University of Illinois and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

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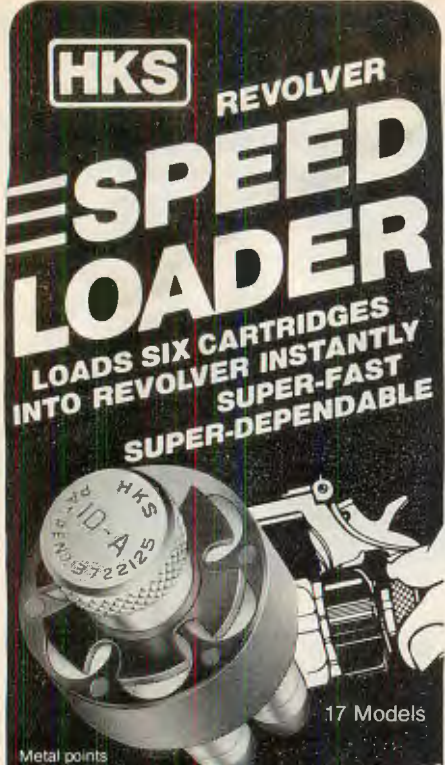


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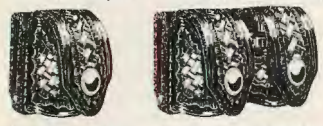
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**ROBERT DENARD**

Continued from page 55

A witch doctor in the tiny Indian Ocean republic had warned the president, half-mad dictator Ali Solih, to beware of a man with a dog. Solih immediately conjured up the spectre of Bob Denard as the unknown dog-owner. Denard heard of the prophecy and was delighted. He promptly supplied the dog.

And Denard's dog story immediately went around the world. The guy is a publicity natural, as Hollywood has noticed.

In fact, Bob Denard's drama of Bob Denard, real-life mercenary, may be coming to an end — replaced by the celluloid version "soon to be a major motion picture."

At least, that's according to the noises now coming out of Hollywood, New York City and Paris. Denard mustered his little private army, *les affreux* (the Frightful Ones), in an empty Paris nightclub the other day. He gave them the word.

I'm retiring, Denard told his boys. But I'm talking to MGM studios about making a real merc film, he added, the first authentic movie ever made of merc life, of *le baroud* (that's an idiomatic French expression meaning a swashbuckling, piratical life-style).

I won't forget you guys, Denard promised vaguely. The Frightful Ones were delighted. Their boss left, saying he was off to the States to talk to actor Clint Eastwood about playing the starring role.

Bob Denard is quite serious about making the film. After all, he is 56, a bit old for *le baroud*. And he'll be quitting at the apex of his career, despite what later happened in the Comoros. His last major rival in the African merc fraternity, famed Maj. Mike Hoare of South Africa, has drawn 10 years in a South African prison. Hoare was the sacrificial victim the South Africans offered up to world opinion. They had sponsored a merc operation against another, tiny Indian Ocean republic, the Seychelles Islands. It was a fiasco. Hoare, the ostensible leader, took the fall.

Denard knows that it could just as easily have been him. Merc patrons are like that.

And the big Frenchman and his boys are no longer in official favor in Paris — nor even unofficially. Denard's former patrons, French secret service chiefs, have been ousted and replaced with political appointees. And, unkindest cut of all, the present regime's adviser on the Third World and clandestine conflict is none other than Regis Debray, friend of Fidel Castro and former disciple to Che Guevara — all three, traditional enemies of the Frightful Ones.

So it's time for Denard to pack it in, ending a 23-year career which began with almost instant celebrity early in the Congo wars.

It was 1960 when a big, brawny Frenchman came out of nowhere to help Moise Tshombe organize the Katanga Rebellion which triggered a decade of violence. Denard's burly physique and bearing quickly

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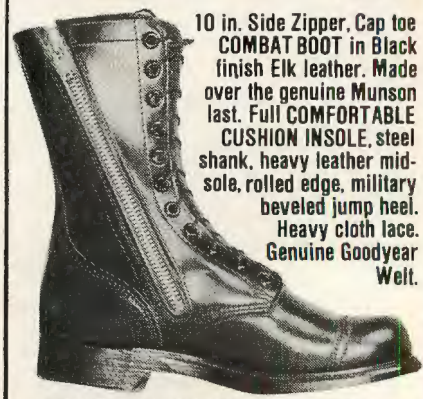
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attracted press attention. French newsmen promptly promoted the merc to "commandant" in their reports. And the rank stuck.

Overnight, Denard became a tactical commander. He soon led an entire mercenary command, the largest merc formation. And he didn't do badly. Denard led his troops with flair if not professional brilliance. As his reputation grew, Denard was credited with vast previous military experience in North Africa and Indochina.

Reporters adored him. Denard's fellow mercs couldn't stand him. To them, Denard was just too much — too much of everything: a moustachioed, swaggering exhibitionist who came out with such vomitous boasts as: "I am the soldier of liberty." Most mercs are prima donnas — and that big bastard was hogging the spotlight!

The fact is, Denard and his personal entourage would have drawn very mixed reviews for field performance from almost any impartial observer. His critics were too obsessed with Denard's celebrity status to pay much attention to the fact that the Frenchman's campaigns were usually flamboyant failures.

Still, you have to give him credit: Until the Congo, Bob Denard had never seen combat. He had no command training or experience. His only military background was as a sailor in the French Navy. This didn't become known until years after his Congo debut.

Denard went on to fight for the losing Royalist side in Yemen in 1962-1963. The next year he returned to the Congo (Zaire) in

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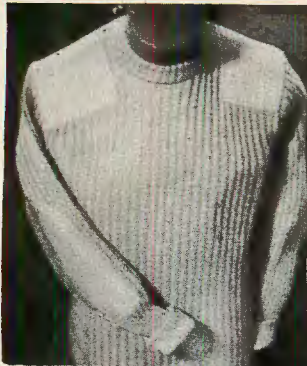
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the service of General Mobutu. The general won — but Denard lost in a Byzantine series of betrayals which ended with Denard fleeing for his life. There was a three-year break, then came the sickening Biafran war in Nigeria.

Denard's side lost again, of course, and Denard settled down to Paris-sponsored little police actions in former French West Africa. Then came the Portuguese collapse in Angola, civil war and the arrival of a Castro Cuban expeditionary force. This time Denard and his boys went to work for the CIA — with Paris' approval, of course.

It seems that Washington had asked Paris to lend a clandestine hand to Jonas Savimbi, leader of the Angolan UNITA guerrilla organization in south Angola. That was early in 1976 just before the rout of CIA's own African allies and mercs in northern Angola, Paris obligingly put the Agency in touch with Denard.

The Denard group was paid \$500,000 for its services. They consisted of sending in no more than a dozen hand-picked mercenaries — and Denard didn't send himself. And, for once, the operation was reasonably successful: The Frenchmen at least didn't lose. They managed to stabilize the Savimbi forces and set up supply lines to the outside world.

Seven years later, the UNITA guerrillas are still a powerful force, controlling large areas of southern Angola — and so far they are the only pro-Western forces who have inflicted serious defeats on Castro's tough, well-armed Cubans (see "Appointment in Angola," June '83 and "Inside Free Angola," July '83). Contrast that with the CIA record against Castro.

Denard himself has never set foot in Angola. Can he claim credit for his people's success there? Of course. Had it been a fiasco he would have been blamed. His the responsibility either way.

As of 1983, the Frightful Ones claim they fought 13 operations and campaigns for *Le Vieux*, The Old Man. No more action is in sight. They prowl Paris bistros these days. They're looking for contracts, say they. But one suspects they mean film contracts. They've even started reminiscing about the old days.

How were they first recruited? And why did they join?

"Don't believe that bullshit about *Le Vieux* recruiting only in Brussels and signing up mainly Belgians," they'll tell you. "Me, for instance, I'm from Lyons. And Denard isn't a Belgian either; he's really from Gascony. That *merde* was to take the French government off the hook."

Denard recruited at first by running little ads in French newspapers. He asked for applications from men interested in security work overseas — "military references appreciated." The last three words were the tip-off. Denard was flooded with would-be mercenaries.

"As for why we joined, it was the usual. Some of us were running away from a life that had become intolerable. But most of us joined for the Denard life-style, *le baroud*."

There's that phrase again: The muddled

French term which, nonetheless, expresses the mercenary mystique.

The Frightful Ones like to talk about their Comoro contract. With good reason: It was one of the sweetest in recent merc history, one of the best executed, a textbook classic. Would that it were typical. . . .

With equal good reason they don't have much to say about the op preceeding the Comoros: Operation Zangaro. The most charitable description of that one was, says one participant, "five hours of fuck-up."

Here it is, Bob Denard, the Zangaro story. Is the following what you mean by *le baroud*?

On Sunday, 6 January 1977, a DC-7 landed at the international airport outside Cotonu, capital of the former French colony of Benin. Forty French mercs spilled out of the plane and took over the airport. With them were 60 West African blacks, hired mainly to camouflage the fact that the operation was primarily European.

Denard had launched the long-planned strike to oust Benin's Pres. Mathieu Kerekou, the little country's "scientific Marxist" dictator. The name "Zangaro" was drawn from Frederick Forsythe's *Dogs of War*, the tale of mercs who took over a fictional African country, Zangaro, remarkably similar to Benin.

The name was to prove prophetic — although not in the manner Denard conceived. Before writing the book, Forsythe himself had financed a strike against a very real African state, Equatorial Guinea, which had ended in fiasco. Operation Zan-

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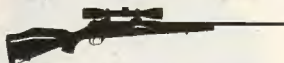
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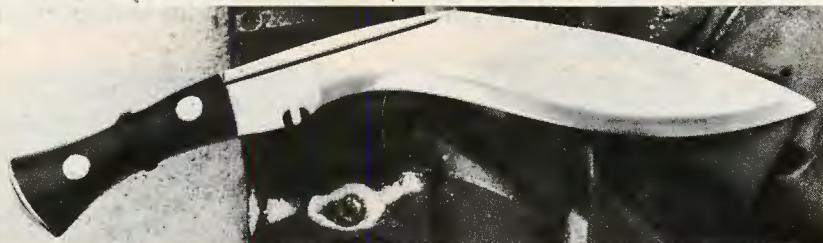
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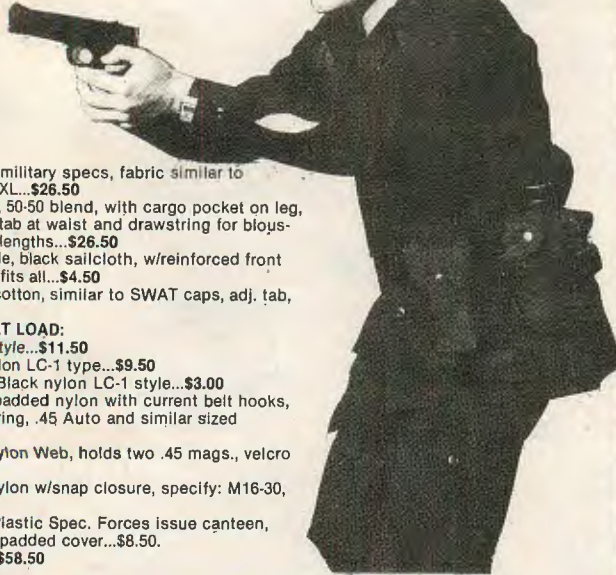
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garo duplicated the real *Dogs of War* story only too faithfully.

It was to be a "surgical strike," the mercs were told as they trained in Morocco. The operation was to be a lightning-swift, three-pronged assault on Benin's capital. Denard even had built for his boys an elaborate mock-up of the city and the three major targets.

And Denard's Paris patrons supplied him with complete and up-to-date intelligence coverage of the situation. That's what *Le Vieux* assured his troops.

So when the mercs poured out of their plane at the Cotonni airport, the operation was to be little more than another well-rehearsed drill. The targets: (1) the National Palace, (2) the *Maison de la Radio*, (3) the barracks of the capital's army garrison.

The whole thing shouldn't take five hours.

The mercs moved out of the airport and headed unerringly for the designated site of the *Maison de la Radio*, the city's main radio station. No radio station. There was nothing there at all. They never did find it.

Second fiasco: The National Palace. Intelligence said it would be guarded by sleepy, barefoot tribesmen who would bolt at the first bullet. Instead, it was ringed by very tough and well-trained North Koreans toting machine guns.

The mercs reached the Palace, took a long look, and decided they didn't want the Palace after all.

As for the third target, the barracks, forget it. That's what Denard's boys did.

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And, as Bob Denard's old enemies chorused, most of the responsibility was at the command level. The old man must be getting senile.

Denard and his whores of war retreated into silence and seclusion for the next 18 months or so. It seemed end of the line for *Le Vieux*. Others, more familiar with Denard and merc psychology generally, predicted he and his boys would make a supreme effort to recoup.

They did. The Comoros op of May 1978 was the result.

The islands' mad dictator, Alie Solih, was shot and Denard installed his client, Ahmed Abdullah, as president. Now pay close attention because this gets complex.

It was Denard who had installed Ahmed Abdullah as Comoros' president in July 1975. It was Denard who overthrew Ahmed Abdullah two months later. It was Denard who then put his patron, Ali Solih, in the palace. Finally, Denard had now ousted Solih and put back in Abdullah.

Daisy chain conspiracy like that is common in the twilight zone of the mercenary. Mercs like to quote a bit of ancient wisdom: "Your friends are potential enemies. Your enemies are potential friends."

In the euphoria of victory, Bob Denard seemed to forget that advice. Instead of looking over his shoulder, Denard said he looked to the future. *Le Vieux*, said he, was to be no more. The battered old mercenary had finally found a home. He was going to retire. Here in the Comoros he would spend the rest of his life.

"A man reaches a point in his life when it's time to settle down," the new strong man of Comoros told his admiring subjects. "This place has good food and pretty women. What more can you want?"

To show he meant what he said, Denard took a Comoro wife and converted to Islam. Just to be on the safe side, he also took the post of commander of the army and police and control of the islands' post office and telephone system.

Alas, the new Denard paid little heed to his official responsibilities.

They grow cloves in the Comoros, and vanilla and the ylang-ylang tree which produces a rich fragrance used in the perfume industry. The former *Le Vieux* settled down under the ylang-ylang tree and sniffed its fragrance.

But while Denard paid little further attention to his client and puppet president, Ahmed Abdullah, old Ahmed had certainly not forgotten the one-time *Le Vieux*, nor the maxim about friends and enemies.

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Abdullah made his first policy decision: That damn Frenchman has to go. 'Twas ever thus for mercs.

And go he did — but with a commendable lack of mayhem. By client-mercenary standards, it was a remarkably clean break. The French government backed up Abdullah's demand. Your boy, the white mercenary, Abdullah had told Paris, is an embarrassment to us both. Paris agreed. And, finally, so did Denard.

President Abdullah even gave him a farewell banquet. He toasted Denard. We're kicking this guy out, Abdullah told the assembled local notables and diplomats, "but he goes out through the front door with his head held high."

Denard didn't have much to say except to claim again that he's quitting the life. Then he disappeared — again.

"And so once more the white mercenary in black Africa has been forced to flee," commented South Africa's *To The Point* magazine, "lick his wounds and wait for another opportunity. His career spans more than three decades on three continents, but he has yet to taste the spoils of victory. On the Comoro Islands he came close to it and it was here he planned to make his last stand."

In Paris, a former Frightful One told newsmen: "Retired or not, last stand or not, no one can say with certainty that this is the final chapter in *le baroud* of Bob Denard."

And it wasn't. Dickering with Hollywood film makers got underway in 1981. At this writing, *Le Vieux* is reported to have signed a contract with Clint Eastwood, the actor-producer who recently financed a mercenary expedition into Laos to look for MIAs (see SOF's POW/MIA Special). In Paris, the Frightful Ones are so excited they've taken to bathing and shaving. They expect to be included in the cast.

At this point, only two things can be said with assurance about the planned picture. It will be monumental hit or flop — Denard never does things by halves. And Bob Denard will be silently, feverishly repeating to himself that old mercenary maxim each time he does business with his new friend and patron, Clint Eastwood. ☞

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## CHOATE

Continued from page 37

Leaving the armory and the break room, we pass through a door into Choate Machine and Tool's 24,000-square-foot factory/warehouse, which is due to double in size this year. Choate's three other buildings take care of the actual molding, the heavy lathe work for his metal accessories and the custom finishing (bluing and Parkerizing) he does.

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Garth Choate's operation is so complete, he even manufactures his own magazine springs to go along with his magazine extensions for riot guns. The whole kit includes extension, spring and one of those shell followers you can see in the dark.

Back in the office, sitting beneath the

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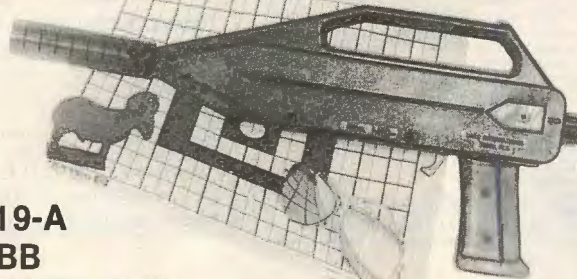
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horns of Greater Kudu and Cape Buffalo he has taken, Choate talks about his career as an inventor — for that in truth is what he is, much in the tradition of Franklin and Edison, Colt and Garand. This talent shows itself in novel, almost whimsical ways in many of Choate's small offerings.

Take, for example, his version of a letter opener: a fiberglass-filled nylon knife that passes right through a metal detector but slices flesh like steel. This is the Executive Letter Opener, and it comes with a nylon boot sheath.

Next Choate introduced the Executive Ice Scraper, a knife-edged knuckle duster of the same plastic. SOFers who have made it to the past couple of conventions will recall Garth's passing out hundreds of these trinkets, and they can look forward to a very special ace he has up his sleeve for the '83 meeting. But I won't spoil his fun by letting the cat out here.

Where does he get his ideas? "When someone says, 'I wish somebody would make a . . .,' my ears go straight up," Garth says. He moves to the conference table and pulls something out of a stack of wire folding-stocks. He holds up a pair of M16 magazines yoked together by a wide, flat clamp.

"Here, look at this," he says. "This is an idea [SOF Small Arms Editor] Ken Hackathorn gave me. It's called a magazine clip. You see, it holds the two magazines together so the empty can be disengaged and the full one inserted all in one motion. And since they're both upright, you don't have the problem of getting dirt inside like you do when you tape magazines together with one up and one down. And it's shorter; no plowing up the dirt when you go into prone position. It's actually the second good idea Ken gave me. The other was a butt-pad extender for the Mini-14. It just screws right on, to either a conventional stock or one of mine, and it keeps long-armed galoots from banging themselves in the chin with the Mini's short stock."

Glenn Choate, Garth's son, handles the day-to-day details and paper work at the factory. Garth has a knack for people and invention. That's why his desk is flanked on one side by a deep leather couch for conversation (with a nearby bar hidden behind louvered bifold doors) and on the other by his drafting table. Garth pulls out one of the filed portfolios of designs to show me the work he's doing on the M1 Carbine accessories. He pauses.

"Wait a second," he says. And with the deft touch of a draftsman he corrects a glitch in the specs. There is something awesome in a man so physically imposing as Garth Choate intent on this sort of meticulous small-work. Especially when you realize he never loses the forest in the trees.

Because he listens to what folks want, Garth will never be an average intelligence with one idea less each year. "I only hope," he says, gesturing to the drawer of ideas and notes in the filing cabinet behind his desk, "that I live long enough to get to all of these." He laughs, and adds, "But by then, there'll just be another drawerful."



Garth's latest weapon project is one that stands to create a whole new direction in riot-gun development. Working with Bill Holmes — another designer from Fayetteville, Ark. — Garth is tooling three prototypes of a military/police shotgun unlike anything ever seen before.

"In the past," Garth explains, "military and police shotguns were just converted sporting arms. And that presented all kinds of problems. So Bill and I decided to build a new one from scratch, designed strictly for military and police work, and with no sporting application."

What they've come up with is a clip-fed pump. Its profile is very like that of the M16. The forearm encircles the barrel and rides on ball bearings — no binding as with even the best riot guns, whose actions work on bushings. It has a bayonet lug, a detachable or side-folding stock, a carrying handle that also doubles as a scope or flashlight mount, and a 360-degree sling-swivel up front, so the weapon can be carried at "sling arms," flat across the back or suspended from the shoulder in assault position. The trigger-group with its thumb lever safety is out of the M16, the only "off-the-rack" component in the entire piece. And all this weighs in at around 10 pounds.

Anyone who has hefted F.I.E.'s entry in the assault-shotgun race will know how awkward the bulky contraption is. Anyone who has shot one will know that its premier virtue is the pump-action option for clearing the automatic ejector. The Choate/Holmes design looks at this stage to be light-years ahead of anything else in the field for reliability and natural feel.

The best part is that Garth Choate plans to have a working prototype available for show-and-tell at this year's SOF convention in Las Vegas. If he does, he'll be dealing out more than one kind of ace. ☒

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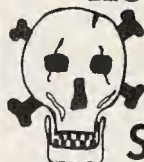
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## RUMOR CONTROL

Continued from page 16

lands in the target country and promptly gets hell kicked out of him in the local jail?

Well, sometimes Hollywood does follow — or in this case forecast — real life.

Surinam, drifting fast to Castro's orbit, is one of the "hot" targets for soldiers of fortune, primarily from the Netherlands. One Dutch soldier of fortune landed at Paramaribo, Surinam, earlier this year on a recon for a group interested in changing governments in that country. The Dutchman was apprehended quickly, his legs and arms broken during questioning, and was shot shortly afterward.

Other members of the group were apprehended in July when authorities in the Netherlands learned of the plot and made some arrests in Europe. Part of the plot exposed in July involved the transport of some SOFs, mostly former residents of Surinam, from Florida.

*Work advisory:* Things to consider before joining the Surinam group: 1) as usual, it is not well-funded 2) has no Western-government backing and 3) has serious security problems. Don't volunteer for a recon of Paramaribo.

## AFGHAN INFIGHTING...

**A**LTHOUGH the Afghan Freedom Fighters are giving the Soviet Union fits in that four-year-old war, SOF's latest word from Afghanistan is that the Afghans are having increasingly serious trouble with tribal infighting.

Every correspondent SOF has sent to Afghanistan has reported the infighting. It appears now that one sad consequence of success against the USSR is that it gives the Afghans time to fight each other.

The fighting between Hezb' Islami (a conservative group) and Jamaat Islami (somewhat less conservative) is getting worse, as is the fighting between other tribal groups.

The worst battles have been between the Toory (Shia Muslims armed by Khomeini) and their long-time blood enemies, the Mangals along the road to Teramangal, Pakistan. The village is important since it is the *closest* Pakistani settlement to Kabul. The problem is that the Toory-Mangal infighting forces the mujahideen to detour around Teramangal and increases the Peshawar-to-Kabul trip from three days to 12 days. The road has stayed closed as many as 10 days at a time recently.

The infighting, of course, plays right into the hands of the puppet-government in Kabul and rumor is the government has been funneling some supplies to the Toory guerrillas. ☒

# BULLETIN BOARD



Continued from page 17

car opposite the Interior Ministry in San Jose, killing one Nicaraguan and injuring two others. Police are investigating to find out if they were victims or inept terrorists.

Meanwhile, Francisco Tacsan Lamm, chief of Costa Rica's Intelligence and Security Directorate, was dismissed from his post, as an "internal measure," according to government sources. Tacsan isn't talking, but street talk in San Jose had it that he was dumped because of his tough attitude toward Sandinistas.

As Costa Rican internal security continued to be threatened, the commander of Panama's national guard, Gen. Ruben Dario Paredes, pledged Panamanian support to help Costa Rica deal with the "revolution, violence and bloodshed" exported by Cuba and Nicaragua.

## WORN-OUT WEAPONS...

The Security Assistance Branch of the Department of Army assured SOF that all M60 machine guns and other weapons shipped to El Salvador have either been new or reconditioned to "as new" condition, and suggested that the worn and weary state of the weapons observed by SOF (see "Arming El Salvador," September '83) was a result of hard use and poor maintenance by the Salvadorans.

This contention is supported by what the SOFers observed: weapons constantly in the field, in and out of combat, inadequate maintenance materials and training, and gunners and assistant gunners not specifically assigned to each weapon. Such treatment can take the shine off any weapon in a hurry.

Further, U.S. Army Ranger battalions, who are as well-trained and -supported as any troops but also work in intensive training environments, turn in their M60 machine guns for depot rebuild every six months.

SOF did not get a chance to inspect weapons newly delivered to the Salvadorans.

## IF YOU LIKED THE FIRST ONE...

Euan Lloyd, producer of *The Final Option* (see "SOF at the Movies," September '83), also produced *The Wild Geese*, probably the best movie

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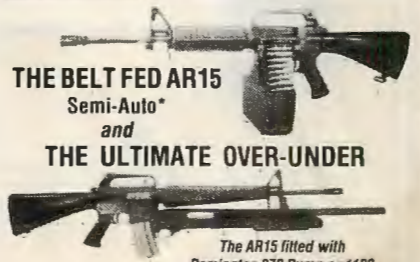


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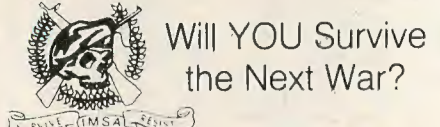
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made about soldiers of fortune. Coming in 1984 — *The Wild Geese II*, also by Lloyd.

SOF doesn't know much about the script yet, but filming starts in Austria in January and SOF has been invited to come over for the fun.

Another movie to look for next year is *Mission MIA*, based on Jim Pollock's bestselling book. Jim tells us John Carpenter will direct and the scriptwriter who wrote the *Dirty Dozen*, has been signed. Filming on the Raystar Productions (for Columbia Pictures) movie is scheduled to begin in March, with the 'Nam scenes being shot in the Philippines. SOF has also been invited to the set of this movie.

These invitations have set off a flurry of in-house maneuvering here at SOF. It seems we suddenly have a lot of former military types, now war correspondents, who just happen to be "experts" on film-making.

## SHEEP IN WOLVES' CLOTHING...

Two priests from Chicago dressed in high-ranking officers' uniforms and an Army Reserve warrant officer from Salem, Ala., were apprehended and arrested after they sneaked into an isolated barracks at Ft. Benning, Ga., to entice Salvadoran soldiers being trained there to "lay down their arms, stop killing their brothers and sisters and join us." A telephone number was provided for those who wanted asylum in the United States.

Rev. Roy Bourgeois, a Maryknoll priest, Rev. Larry Rosebaugh and Linda Ventimiglia were charged with entering a restricted area and impersonating officers. The case has been turned over to the FBI, which will decide if formal charges will be pressed.

Before the three were apprehended, they passed out several hundred anti-war leaflets, printed in both English and Spanish, and posted them on bulletin boards or slipped them under the pillows of the 525 Salvadoran troops then training at Ft. Benning.

The three had mapped out the area from previous visits to the grounds and purchased their uniforms from an Army surplus store.

## VESTED INTEREST IN SAFETY...

A Little Rock, Arkansas, non-profit, community improvement group, Excalibur, is raising funds to buy bullet-proof vests for Arkansas State Police troopers who don't have them. Arkansas troopers are required to buy their own vests, at a cost of \$200.

Herbert Rideout, president of Excalibur, said the group chose this project because of the increased use of high-caliber handguns and rifles by criminals. The group has mailed 52 letters to

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## SOVIET SURROGATES IN AFGHANISTAN...

Col. Ghulam Datageau Wardak, a Soviet-trained Afghan colonel who defected to the rebels, told a Committee for a Free Afghanistan-sponsored forum on Capitol Hill that he personally had seen PLO, Cuban, Ethiopian, Yemenese, Bulgarian and East German troops fighting with Soviet troops in Afghanistan, and talked of the Soviet "scorched-earth" policy which has resulted in grave food shortages in Afghanistan.

The Soviets have bombed the Panjsher Valley at least six times — with special emphasis on food and water sources — according to Wardak, leaving 90 percent of its inhabitants homeless and starving. The converted freedom fighter claims that no Western aid has gotten beyond Peshawar, Pakistan, to relieve the Afghan victims.

Although Wardak said he had not seen any Syrian troops in Afghanistan, he claimed to have studied with them in a Moscow military academy.

## JOBS IN CENTRAL AMERICA...

SOF regularly gets inquiries about civilian technician jobs in security, police and military fields in Central America. We are working on several ideas to use the private sector in Central America to stop communist aggression, but we know of no job openings. Any jobs that are available, or that will likely develop, will require fluency in Spanish in addition to applicable military and/or medical skills.

## ARMY ADOPTS NEW RIFLE...

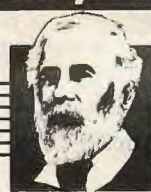
The recently approved M16A2 rifle should be in the hands of Army personnel by the mid-1980s, according to *Infantry* magazine.

An improved version of the 5.56mm weapon, the M16A2 sports several new design features that improve range, durability and handling, including changing the barrel rifling from one turn in 12 inches to one in seven; using a burst-control device to limit automatic fire to three rounds; replacing flash suppressor with muzzle brake compensator; making the barrel more rugged and adding a deflector near the ejector port to facilitate left-handed shooters. ☞

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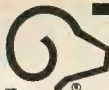
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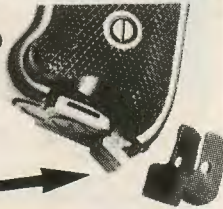
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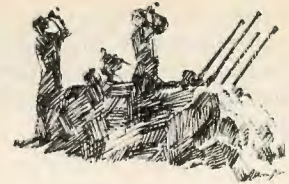
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## FLAK



Continued from page 8

the disrespect one comrade in arms had for another.

As a member of B52, "Delta Project," having been accepted by Maj. Charlie Beckwith just prior to that mission, I can say your story pretty much has the facts as I remember them. I was not on that mission, but was at the base operation in Nha Trang when the mission returned. Hoagland, along with others, died in that mission and, in a small way, they were remembered by having their names listed on our buildings.

It is unfortunate Gritz never succeeded or was never allowed to succeed. As do others, I believe his operation was flawed, but he tried. That is more than our government has done, and they have the capacity to pull it off.

I would appreciate if you could send me the addresses for the Special Forces Association and the Special Operations Association.

Louis Panigutti  
Newtown, Connecticut

*It was not a matter of Gritz' capability to succeed or Gritz not being allowed to succeed. Gritz' intelligence was as flawed as his operation.*

*Incidentally, the government has tried. In 1981 two patrols were sent to reach one specific site in Laos. SOF has heard rumors of two other attempts made in the fall of 1981 — not by the government or Gritz. Both are said to have been sponsored by Americans. We know very little about one of the attempts, somewhat more about the other one. It was conducted in Laos by indig and ended when the recon team got shot up in a fire fight with Pathet Lao forces. The group was able to extract and kept their operation secret. In addition, SOF knows of two Americans who claim to have made a number of solo trips into Laos in the late '70s hunting for information on POWs and MIAs. There is reason to believe their accounts.*

*One of the negative impacts of the Gritz affair is that it has made it difficult to get into Laos, whereas in the past it was, if not easy, at least not difficult. At various times in 1981, SOF sent six Americans into northern Laos with no problem. One of them was actually offered an escorted trip all the way across Laos into southern China, along the route being used by the anti-communist guerrillas.*

Contact the Special Operations Association at P.O. Box 366, Marina, CA 93933; the Special Forces Association is at P.O. Box 40122, Fayetteville, N.C. 28304. —Jim Graves

## SLIP OF THE PEN...

Sirs:

On reading the test of the Galil rifle in the July '83 issue, I came up with a few comments to make to the author, Peter G. Kokalis.

He states, "Both the plastic and wooden handguards are attached permanently to the barrel and cannot be removed." Not true. When field stripped with the gas cylinder off, there is a small lever on the right side of the barrel. If turned 180 degrees till it points to the muzzle, the handguards will slide forward and can be removed.

Kokalis recommends not lubricating the gas cylinder and piston, and I agree. But I have also found that after two rapid-fire 30-round magazines, I can hold my ARM by the gas cylinder. It is warm, but not hot. I wouldn't grab the barrel, though.

I don't claim to be an expert on the Galil, but I've put 1,200 rounds through mine and have made these observations. I haven't had any stoppages of any kind.

D. Glick

Simi Valley, California

*"What can we know? or what can we discern, when error chokes the windows of the mind?" (Sir John Davies, "The Vanity of Human Learning," 1596.) Sorry, but I goofed. Of course, the Galil handguards, both plastic and wooden, can be easily removed. Thanks to Glick for catching my glitch. — Peter G. Kokalis*

## MOTHER KNOWS BEST...

Sirs:

As the mother of the South African, Johan Fritz, who died in the Seychelles coup in 1981, I feel compelled to write to correct misstatements in your articles on the coup (see SOF March '82 and April '82).

In the April issue you refer to Johan as 24 and nervous. First, he was 22 and second, not a nervous young man at all. He was selected to serve in the South African Defense Force Reconnaissance Commando, had a completely deadpan face when required, and was cool, calm and collected. I have known tough men in my life, but none tougher than Johan. As a young boy of seven, he broke both arms and had the flesh of his chin torn off the bone in a horse-riding accident, but he never cried.

You implied that if it had not been for Johan's nervousness the coup might have been successful. Dead men tell no tales, so as a member of his family who has studied the coup in detail over the past year, I aim to set the record straight.

It was claimed that Johan went through the red channel and the AK rifle was found in his bag. The truth is, it all happened to Kevin Beck. He told me the story himself, which was corroborated by the other men

Continued on page 106



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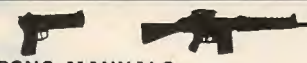


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**FLAK**



*Continued from page 103*

in the party. Beck was taken to the office, etc. Not Johan.

Whose bullet killed Johan will never be known. But for honor's sake, let the true facts be known. To have lost a son of Johan's caliber is not easy, but to blame all on him is not decent. It tends to give one no faith in the accuracy of *Soldier of Fortune* if facts such as these are allowed to be printed.

Adree Fritz  
 Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa

When Mike Hoare took his men into the Seychelles by a chance I happened to be in Johannesburg. Putting together a story on what exactly happened was not easy under the circumstances. The government of South Africa held the men who hijacked the Air India jet incommunicado. Therefore the story had to be put together from what I could learn from other South African journalists, from soldiers of fortune in Johannesburg who had been asked along

on the Seychelles op and turned it down and from public accounts from the Seychelles.

Very early on, a number of people in South Africa who had knowledge of what had happened told me the operation was blown when one of the South Africans went through the red channel and an AK was discovered. Your son, Johan Fritz, was identified by one of the policemen in the airport as the person who was arrested.

I could probably have discovered the mistake if I could have talked to the men the South Africans were holding, or if I could have gone into the Seychelles. But since the government of the Seychelles was convinced that my presence in South Africa at the time of the operation was suspicious, I was not about to fly there.

In the months following publication of the two articles I wrote on the operation, I had a number of telephone conversations with Mike Hoare. But since he was involved in a trial and since we knew the conversations were being recorded — probably both in South Africa and here — we didn't discuss the Seychelles operation except in general terms.

When Hoare is released SOF intends to publish a comprehensive account of the operation and at that time we will make sure the events in the airport are described accurately.

We regret any error we made regarding Johan Fritz and appreciate your bringing this to our attention. —Jim Graves ✕

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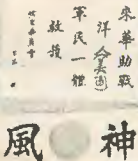
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